Seirei Tsukai no Blade Dance Volume 1

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These are most of the illustrations in Volume 1:

剣と学院と火猫少女

精霊使いの剣舞

ブレイドダンス

志瑞祐

Illustration

桜はんぺん

MF文庫 J

し-04-07

精霊使いの剣舞（ブレイドダンス）

剣と学院と火猫少女

志瑞祐

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メディアファクトリー

精霊使いの剣舞　剣と学院と火猫少女

清らかな乙女にのみ許された特権――精霊契約。ここアレイシア精霊学院では、精霊使いとして訓練を積んできた貴族の令嬢たちが集められ、エリート教育を受けていた。少年カミトは、ふとした事故から学院生の少女・クレアの水浴びを覗き、さらに彼女が求めていた精霊と代わりに契約してしまう。そう、カミトはこの世界ではありえない、男の精霊使いだったのだ！「あ、あんた……あたしの精霊、奪った責任とりなさいよね！」「は？」「あんたがあたしの契約精霊になりなさいっ！」箱入りお嬢様たちの学園に放り込まれたカミトの運命は!?　刻印輝くエレメンタル・ファンタジー！

MF文庫J

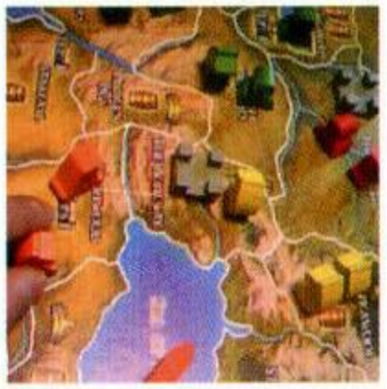
志瑞祐の本

やってきたよ、ドルイドさん！ 1～3 [イラスト：絶叫]

白銀の城姫（ベルクフリート） 1～3 [イラスト：上田夢人]

精霊使いの剣舞（ブレイドダンス） 剣と学院と火猫少女
[イラスト：桜はんぺん]

【著者】



志瑞祐
しみず・ゆう

新シリーズは美少女いっぱいの学園ハーレム×バトコメ！　とても楽しく書かせていただきました！
巻を増すごとに「ラブ増量、面白さ倍増！」を目指してがんばりますので、どうぞよろしくお願いします！

第四回ＭＦ文庫Ｊライトノベル新人賞受賞。なごみ系ケルトコメディ『やってきたよ、ドルイドさん！』シリーズ、お城擬人化ファンタジー『白銀の城姫』シリーズを上梓。写真はメ切前にひとりマニアックなボードゲームで遊ぶ作者（現実逃避中）。

【イラストレーター】

桜はんぺん
さくら・はんぺん

4月6日生まれのゲーム原画家、イラストレーター。原画担当に『さくらビットマップ』（HOOKSOFT）など。
好物は照れ隠しする女の子、しまぱん。
HP「Petite*Cerisier」
http://petitecerisier.moo.jp/

カバーイラスト／桜はんぺん　装丁／百足屋ユウコ（ムシカゴグラフィクス）

剣と学院と火猫少女

剣精霊ブレイドダンス

精霊使いの舞

志瑞祐
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剣と学院と火猫少女

精霊使いの剣舞
ブレイドダンス

志瑞祐
Illustration
桜はんぺん

「……なんだ？
いったい、なにが起きている？」
「あれは狂精霊です、カミト」
かたわらのエストが
無表情につぶやいた。

「おとなしく消し炭になりなさいっ！」

「俺は、二度と精霊剣舞祭（ブレイドダンス）には出ないと決めたんだ」

カゼハヤ・カミト

「カミト、カミト、ご主人様はカミト……」

エスト

「男の精霊使いなど、ぜったいに認めないからな！」

エリス・ファーレンガルト

「ねえ、あなた、わたくしの下僕にならない？」

リンスレット・ローレンフロスト

スカーレット

クレア・ルージュ

精霊使いの剣舞（ブレイドダンス）

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Chapter 1: You Are My Contracted Spirit

Part 1

In a quiet forest where the sun's rays shine through the leaves-

Splash—

-the sound of water resounded through the trees.

Kamito opened his mouth wide in shock and stood stock still.

There was a girl. In front of his eyes was a naked girl.

On top of that, he thought, she was a cute girl.

She had large eyes with ruby pupils and lustrously moist cherry-red lips.

Her white skin was as smooth as milk and dazzling.

Her beautifully slender legs disappeared below the water surface.

However, what caught his eyes more than anything was her blazingly crimson red hair that clung to her gorgeous, porcelain-like body.

However, she was naked.

Stark naked.

"..."

Kamito felt a cold sweat begin to form on his back.

Not good. Naked is not good.

.....Speaking of which, he ought to run away.

The rational part of his brain was certainly telling him to run.

However, his body wouldn't move.

It was as if he was enchanted. The scene was just too surreal.

The girl—

Her moist and beautiful eyes blinked as she looked at the intruder who had appeared quite suddenly.

Her expression was blank. It seemed like she had yet to fully grasp the situation.

She had not even covered her small, developing breasts yet.

Tick.

A water droplet fell from the young girl's bangs.

With that sound, Kamito finally regained his senses.

"Ah—Err...," Kamito stumbled over his words.

He tore his gaze from the naked girl who was still standing motionlessly.

"I guess I should say...this is a huge accident, ok? It is definitely an unfortunate accident for the both of us..."

At this time, the boy made two fatal errors:

The first was that he started to stumble through making excuses. The best choice for him, of course, was to take advantage of the fact that the girl was dazed and run away immediately.

And the other error was—

"Even though this is an accident, I have seen you like this. I must apologize."

Up to this point, he was still fine, but then he continued...

"However, don't worry. I am a healthy boy, but I don't have that kind of interest."

Looking at the young girl's developing chest, he said—

"I have no interest in the naked body of a kid."

He stepped on a gigantic landmine.

An icy silence fell.

The girl slowly raised her arm, red hair coiling around its length.

Her shoulders shook slightly.

It wasn't because she was cold, however, Kamito was oblivious to that fact.

"Sixteen—"

The girl's delicate lips mumbling something, and Kamito lifted his eyebrows.

"I-I-I am sixteen!!!"

The instant she yelled this, the young girl's red hair stood on end.

"Huuh!?" Kamito opened his eyes wide in surprise,

"Sixteen!? For real? A sixteen year-old with such a pitiful chest—"

He quickly covered his mouth. It was already too late.

"Unforgivable," the young girl said in a low, cold voice , "D-Definitely unforgivable.....you-you-you peeping demon, pervert, lewd beast!"

"You're quite knowledgeable to know words like lewd beast," Kamito replied as he narrowed his eyes.

At this time, he noticed that the trees were making a low, whisper-like rustle.

Is that the wind? he mused, *No, that's-*

Guardian of the crimson blaze, keeper of the undying hearth! Now is the time to abide by our blood contract; come forth and do my bidding!

From the young girl's lips sprang an incantation in the language of the Spirits.

At that instant, accompanied by the sound of air rushing into a vacuum, a whip of flames manifested in the hand of the girl.

An elementalist! Kamito realized as he stared at the girl.

An elementalist controls something that exists from a different dimension apart from this world; a place called "Astral Zero."

Elementalists were princess maidens, girls who have made contracts with the spirits living in that other place.

They can use different types of spirits and freely wield their powers.

It seemed that the girl in front of Kamito had contracted with a fire-type spirit.

That the young girl was an elementalist wasn't something to be that surprised about.

After all, this was the area where the country's excellent elementalists were gathered.

Nevertheless, it's surprising that she can use an elemental waffe, Kamito thought.

The way spirits are summoned and formed upon being summoned into this world can be broken down into two main groups:

The first is a form that appears as a lump of divine power; mass-less and of an indeterminate form. It is purely the summoning of a spirit's power and is used primarily as a battery for when spirit magic is used.

The other summoning form is the pure form that summons a part of the spirit's existence.

This summoning requires tremendous amounts of divine power and, on top of that, is very difficult to control. So, those capable of summoning a spirit's existence are said to be the elite amongst the ranks of elementalists.

Even further, the girl before his eyes was not just using a spirit, but was using that spirit's power in a highly-optimized elemental waffe.

What that means is that...would I now be in a potential life or death situation? As the thought suddenly hit him, Kamito was stunned.

Where the flame whip touched the water's surface a gush of white steam rose.

"You...you have guts." The girl murmured in a trembling voice.

Her face was red. Was it due to her anger or her embarrassment over the situation?

"Really, you have some nerve to p-peek while I, Claire Rouge, am taking my bath," She stammered.

"W-Wait, that is a misunderstanding! Let me explain it in full first!" Kamito shook his head in panic.

"I will not listen to your excuses. Turn into cinders, you pervert!" the girl yelled.

The flame whip ignited furiously in the girl's hand and moved as if it was licking the water surface.

"Oh no..." Kamito propelled his body into the dense bushes nearby.

Nearly at the same time, the Flame Tongue brushed its way over his head.

The idle red residue that remained on the trees which had been cut was like the lingering punchline of a joke. The cut surface of the tree trunks were surprisingly smooth, without any trace of having been touched by fire . The attack had been so fast that the flames did not have the time to ignite the trees.

The hair on Kamito's forehead fluttered down around his mouth while cold sweat started to form on his forehead.

Um, this is a joke, right? I'm not going to die like this, am I ? Kamito nervously thought.

Zing, *biyutsu* – There was an endless dance of crimson flashes cutting both horizontally and vertically in the forest. The surrounding bush was mowed down in the blink of an eye. Having lost his cover, Kamito hurriedly dashed away.

"Don't dodge, pervert, I can't hit you!" the girl called out.

"Don't ask for the impossible, and I'm not a pervert!" Kamito threw back.

Kamito screamed out; at the same time, the whip swung downwards towards his feet, causing a violent spark to slam onto the ground. Rising from the ground, the whip immediately sprang in the direction of the woods, causing more trees to be cut down.

Fortunately among all the unluckiness Kamito was experiencing, the girl—Claire's- aim was quite bad.

This stands to reason though, as one hand was hiding her chest from being seen. In order to conceal her most important part she had squatted in the pond. However, considering how well she was able to handle her whip in such a position, she should normally be quite skilled at using it.

"How conceited despite being a pervert, please obediently turn into cinders!" Claire shouted again at Kamito.

"I'm saying that I'm not a pervert! But by the way," Kamito stopped and turned around, there was something he had noticed for some time... "you need to cover yourself properly. The gaps between your fingers aren't able to hide them completely."

"...eh?" Instantly, Claire's facial expression froze. And — "Kyaaaaaaaaah!"

Blushing deeply and screaming in a strangely cute voice—she quickly hid her chest with both of her hands.

"Ah, idiot!" Kamito involuntarily exclaimed.

Claire had let go, and lost control of the flame whip, and it cleanly severed the trees behind her.

The huge trees slowly crashed towards her. However, Claire did not notice them. Her eyes were closed in embarrassment while she kept embracing her naked chest.

Damn! Kamito exclaimed as he kicked off the ground.

Running with all his strength towards the pond, Kamito jumped towards Claire and grabbed her shoulders.

"Wha—!?" Claire's red pupils dilated widely.

Kamito ignored her outburst and aggressively pushed her down into the water.

The moment Claire's hand touched the water, a gush of steam rose, and the flame whip disappeared.

Immediately after, the nearby trees collided with the water's surface.

Duuuun!

The sound of the trees falling was deafening and created large water columns.

Absorbing the heat of the flames, the now-warm pond water poured down like a heavy rain.

A few seconds later

"Ooh..." Making a seductive noise, Claire slowly opened her eyes.

Her expression was that of shock, her eyes blinked in wonder.

Kamito leaned on Claire and found himself staring into her eyes.

Their faces were so close that if someone were to push on his back lightly, their lips would likely touch.

Claire's crimson hair clung closely to her nape. Her moist lips were cherry red.

Her delicate doll-like face was in front of Kamito's eyes .

For a short moment it looked like he was subconsciously captivated by her. Kamito quickly shook his head.

"...Um, are you alright? Are you hurt?" he asked.

Claire nodded. It seemed as if she had not fully absorbed the situation yet.

Kamito sighed, then tried to stand up.

Funyuu.

His hand had touched something soft underwater.

"Hwaaah!"

What is that? Mud? he thought.

Funyu. *Munyu*[1].

"Hm, ya, hwaaa" From Claire's moist lips came a shallow, sweet voice. Her submerged naked body twitched for some reason.

"Um ..this is?" Having come this far, Kamito finally arrived at a certain conclusion. A certain.....awfully frightening conclusion.

No, wait, calm down. This can't be...that, right?

It couldn't be. It could be no such thing. He desperately tried to deny such a possibility.

When I looked at hers earlier, they weren't so...

"Wh..Wha.. Wha..Whattt .... are..you...do..ing" Claire's lip trembled, shaking involuntarily. She was blushing with tears in her eyes.

Apparently, it wasn't a lump of mud that he had been touching.

"You, pervert—!"

"Gwah!"

Because he got kneed hard in the stomach, Kamito collapsed into the pond's water.

Gugugugugu....!

With a rising heat haze behind her, Claire slowly stood up. The flame whip, which was a manifestation of her flame spirit, was once again in her hand.

The water in the pond instantaneously started to boil, bubbles frothing to the surface all around.

"No..No, it's a misunderstanding! Wait, if you do that, I'm really gonna die....." Kamito pleaded.

"Sh..Shut up pervert, you will die here!"

With an almost ear-splitting, deafening sound, Kamito's body was cast high into the air.

Part 2

A few minutes later...

"Ugh..."

Kamito slowly woke into consciousness, the forest unfolding before his eyes.

He tried to get up—suddenly, he realized that something was coiled around his neck.

It was a leather black whip commonly used for torturing. *What is this thing*, Kamito thought as he tried to take the whip off.

"You finally woke up, you peeping-tom pervert."

The whip around his neck tightened.

"Gweh!? Release me..." Kamito coughed. He then looked upward and saw—

The scarlet-haired young girl – Claire Rouge, stood above him with her hands on her waist. She gazed down at Kamito with a raised eyebrow.

This time, thankfully, she was not naked. She had changed into an adorable school uniform. It's pattern was of black lines on a pure white field. This was the Areishia Spirit Academy's uniform.

A ribbon decorated the front of her uniform. A talisman was sewn in the place where a button would normally rest. Between the gap of her knee-length stockings and her pleated skirt, her beautifully slender legs stuck out brilliantly. Tiny ribbons tied her crimson

hair on both sides. This was the so-called twintail hairstyle. Judging from her still-wet hair, it seems that Kamito had not lost consciousness for that long.

Keeping Kamito's neck bound tightly, Claire puffed up her small chest.

"Well, be grateful. I went easy on you and didn't try to kill you outright," Claire huffed.

"That has to be a lie. You definitely intended to kill me, " Kamito retorted.

"What are you talking about? If I had been serious, you would have been in cinders by now," Claire calmly stated .

She just said something quite frightening really calmly, Kamito nervously thought.

By the way, cinders are the soft ash residue that is left behind when firewood is incinerated.

"I beg for your forgiveness, spare me from becoming cinders. After all, I helped you!" Kamito pleaded.

"Well, yes, I am a fair woman of noble rank, so I'll give you credit for your help. Even so, you are a higher grade than an average pervert, so you are a high-grade pervert, " she snapped.

"In the end the pervert designation doesn't change," Kamito dejectedly sighed, "By the way, isn't a high grade pervert even worse of a designation than an average pervert?!"

"I bet you were only pretending to help me! You...you touched my breast!"

Recalling what happened, Claire's face suddenly turned beet red.

Seeing such a reaction from her, Kamito had an idea.

...This girl, could it be that she is that kind of person?

"So it seems that milady is the type of pervert that has a hobby of whipping men." Kamito teased Claire nonchalantly.

"What!? That is not true! I'm not a pervert!" The response was immediate as Kamito expected. Claire

shook her head and her cheeks instantly became bright red all the way to her ears.

"Then do you enjoy being whipped?" Kamito slyly continued.

"Wha...what..are...you..saying?" Claire's eyes spun as steam puffs rose from her head. She is unsurprisingly flustered.

Oh, as I expected, Kamito smiled bitterly, *This girl is really, really innocent.*

Most likely it wasn't only Claire that was this innocent. After all, Areishia Spirit Academy is a school where elementalist princess maidens are gathered. Only pure maidens are capable of exchanging feelings with the spirits from Astral Zero. Among those princess maidens, those who retain enough divine power to command a contracted spirit are girls from the lines of kings or lords of ancient and honorable families whose elementalist blood has been strengthened through the marriages of many generations.

To maintain the purity of their bodies and hearts, these girls are raised in environments that are completely separated from contact with males starting in childhood:

the so-called elite education for elementalists has no place for men. Therefore, all the girls attending the academy are super innocent princesses who are unaccustomed to dealing with men.

Finding Claire's unexpectedly easy-to-spot weakness, Kamito had the thought to play a prank on her.

From a kneeling position, Kamito looked up at the embarrassed bright-red face of Claire.

"Th—then, there is something I have meant to say since I woke up." Kamito playfully stammered.

"Wh...what is it, you pervert?" Claire replied warily.

"I can see your panties from this angle."

"Fuwah!" Tears began to float in her crimson eyes. Claire hastily pressed down the fringe of her skirt with both hands.

"You...you saw it?" Claire sniffed.

"Only a glance and you are, quite unexpectedly, a very daring girl. Your panties are the same color as your hair." Kamito bluffed.

"You...you lie! They are not red! They are white, white! " Claire shouted.

"Ah, so they are white." Kamito nodded sagely.

"...Eh!?" Realizing that she had been tricked, Claire bit down on her front lip—

"U-Uuuuuuuuuh~" Claire started to cry.

At this sudden unexpected reaction, Kamito panicked. *"No, you're the pervert, a dirty young lady, who reveals the color of her own panties"*, he had planned to say to tease her more but, as expected, he was starting to feel guilty and like a bad person.

Taking the chance while Claire was still crying, Kamito removed the whip from around his neck.

"My bad, I went a bit too far with my prank. Sorry." Kamito stood up and placed his hand on Claire's head. Claire stopped crying, and looked puzzled. "It is my fault that I saw you naked while you were bathing. I have also touched your breasts as well. However, those actions were not intentional. Please believe me."

"Wha-what....."

Seeing the truth of his words in his eyes, Claire could not help but to avert her eyes.

"....What-what is this? If you are not a pervert, then why are you here?"

A question that is not the easiest to answer for Kamito. This forest is under the jurisdiction of Areishia Spirit Academy, known as the Spirit Forest. There would be no reason for a man to be in the grounds of the academy. Even if he was not a pervert, the fact that he was where he should not be could not be contested.

"I was summoned by Greyworth." Kamito told Claire.

"Greyworth...the academy's headmistress!?" Claire questioned suspiciously. Indeed, why would the headmistress summon a male to the academy?

"I'm not lying. Look, here's the evidence." Kamito continued. He took out a letter from within his coat. The letter was signed by the renowned headmistress. It was also stamped with the emblem seal that symbolizes the five great Elemental Lords.

"Is that, the first-rank emblem seal of the Empire!?" Claire cried out, shocked. The first-rank emblem seal is produced by sealing spirits with a special technique into a seal. This seal is rated as the highest among the emblem seals issued by the Empire and is said to be completely impossible to counterfeit. Of course, it is something that is rarely seen but as an elementalist, Claire could certainly tell that it was the real thing.

"It seems to be authentic. But why would the headmistress call a man to the academy?" Claire asked.

"Well, for the answer to that question you'd have to ask Greyworth, that old hag. Being summoned was troublesome for me, too." Kamito sighed.

"'That...that old hag!?'" Claire's face stiffened.

The Dusk Witch, Greyworth, is a greatly respected individual by princess maidens who aim to become Spirit-Knights. It is also said that she is as popular in the Ordesia Empire as the Strongest Blade Dancer, Ren Ashbell. Even after she retired a decade ago from the Twelve Knight Generals, the most elite force of

Spirit-Knights known as the "Numbers," her legendary status as a Witch is still one to be feared and revered to the highest degree.

Well, for me, she is nothing but a nightmare, Kamito thought as he tucked the letter back into it's pocket. " Greyworth is an old acquaintance of mine. I came all the way here but the academy ground is extremely large and so I have lost my way."

Areishia Spirit Academy's grounds is incredibly vast. After all, besides the academy-town at the foot of the hill it also includes the entire spirit forest that surrounds it.

"Could it be that you were misled by the spirits in the forest? That's so lame." Claire snickered.

".....Yeah, that's how it is," Kamito nodded, feeling a bit dejected.

Existing in various locations of the continent, spirit forests connect with Astral Zero through Gates. These forests are inhabited by the spirits that have wandered into this dimension. Most of the spirits have no interest in humankind and as such are harmless. There are also spirits who enjoy playing pranks; they deliberately mislead travelers who stray into the forest. Kamito was

confused by the spirits' whispers and went deeper and deeper into the forest, therefore losing his way.

"Anyway, I'm really glad that I met someone. It would not be fun to become a victim of the forest. Which way should I go to get to the academy?" Kamito asked.

"Which direction...I shall tell you that it takes two hours to get to the academy from here by foot," Claire replied knowledgeably.

"What, that far!?" Kamito yelped.

If he was to walk for such a long distance by himself he would most likely once again be tricked by the spirits. Since there was a student of the academy present, he had thought that the academy was closer than that.

Hmm? Why was this girl taking a bath at this kind of place? Kamito wondered.

Today is indeed a bit hot, nonetheless, instead of coming all this way, there should be showering facilities inside of the academy. There are only girls in the school so there would be nothing to be embarrassed about.

Kamito asked this question of Claire. Claire dug her hands into her wet twintail hair and tried to comb it.

"I was here for the purification ritual for a spirit contract. Being a spring next to a shrine the water here has the highest of purification qualities. You do know that spirits like a woman who has a pure mind and body ?"

"Spirit contract?" Kamito mused.

The moment he heard those words, a throbbing pain came from the back of his left hand, which was covered in a leather glove. Kamito grimaced from the sharp pain.

"A bit further into the forest from here there is an ancient holy sword in a shrine. Rumor has it that a powerful sealed spirit is locked away there. Since the founding of the academy not a single princess maiden has successfully formed a contract with it. It surely sounds like a very proud and noble spirit," Claire said.

Sealed spirits: they are not the normal spirits that reside in Astral Zero and move into this dimension. Among the ranks and types of spirits, there are some who are sealed into weapons or armor by powerful,

ancient elementalists. Most of these sealed spirits have brought about terrible disasters to humankind and are dreadful beings called *Djinn* or *Ifreet* by ancient societies.

Of course, they are not meant to be employed by elementalists. Those strong elementalists of the past sealed these spirits in weapons or armor so that they could never be summoned ever again and deal more harm to the world around them.

"Don't tell me you plan to form a contract with a sealed spirit?" Kamito said, stunned.

"That's right! Do you have a problem with it?" Claire retorted.

"Stop, it is too dangerous!"

"Hmm, you seem to know a bit about sealed spirits even though you are not an elementalist. I am quite aware of the dangers, but I need a powerful spirit no matter what," Claire muttered, biting her tightly closed lips.

Seeing her determination in her expression, Kamito snapped back on the lecture he had on the tip of his tongue.

"Don't you already have a contract with that flame spirit? That is also a powerful spirit, isn't it? Won't it be fine if you just raise it instead?" Kamito wheedled.

A flame spirit is not very rare, but there are only a handful of elementalists who can control a fire spirit and be capable of using elemental waffen in the whole Empire. On another note, elementalists whom have formed a contract with multiple spirits are so rare that they are an extreme minority. Discord between the contracted spirits can cause deterioration of the balance of divine power. Without enough talent, one would not be able to control them.

"Scarlet is an important partner. But—" *I need more power*—. Claire calmly shook her head. "-I have a goal. To achieve it, I must have a strong spirit."

Part 3

Claire's fluffy crimson twintails swung back and forth over her back as she led Kamito deeper into the forest. Although Claire's leather loafers looked quite difficult to walk in, Claire was a well trained elementalist; her steps were light and lively.

"Here it is," Claire muttered.

Her well-proportioned feet stopped walking. With her hands on her hips, Claire looked back at Kamito with a glare.

"Why are you following me, you pervert-peeping maniac?"

"Without your guidance I don't know the way to the academy. As I have said several times, I am not a pervert-peeping maniac. My name is Kamito, Kazehaya Kamito."

"Fufufu, what a weird name. Are you from Quina?" she replied.

Quina is an empire in the eastern region of the continent. It is said that Quina's language, culture, and the relationship between people and spirits largely differ from that of Ordesia.

"No, I am not from Quina. I was born on a far-away, remote island in a very small village."

Kamito intentionally obscured his own statement. Certainly, he was born in an island country in the east, but the larger half of his childhood was not spent there.

"Your name also has quite a unique taste, Claire Rouge ." Kamito hinted.

"Do not call my name in a friendly manner," Claire snapped. "Anyway, my name is a strange name."

"Really? I think it is a nice name."

"Wha-what are you saying, st-stupid!"

Claire blushed, suddenly turned back around and briskly walked in the direction she had indicated earlier.

Claire Rouge—obviously the name is a pseudonym.

Most of the students attending the Areishia Spirit Academy are the young ladies of noble families who have been trained as potential elementalists since childhood. However well-versed he was in the noble families, Kamito had never heard of the Rouge family.

Claire was hiding her noble family name. She must have some reason to do so, but Kamito had no intention to delve deeper.

Everyone has some secrets they want to hide, Kamito thought. Kamito glanced down at his left hand covered by the leather glove. *Even I have mine, too...*

Claire kept walking through the forest. Kamito quickly moved to follow her swaying crimson twintails. Losing sight of Claire inside the forest now would only bring trouble for him later. Kamito was well-aware of the dangers of spending a night inside the Spirit Forest.

"Is that dress the academy's uniform?" Kamito asked.

"Yeah." Claire nodded coldly as she kept moving.

Areishia Spirit Academy uniforms are pretty sturdy and can also serve as a protective garment. They have undergone spirit blessings and have the added effect of raising sacred attributes. The uniform could also function nicely as a ceremonial dress for contracting with or summoning spirits.

"What, are you saying that it doesn't suit me?"

Kamito shrugged his shoulders. "No, it suits you gorgeously," he answered. "Honestly speaking, I am charmed by it."

Fine feathers make fine birds; Kamito planned to mock her with caustic words such as those, but the uniform did fit her so perfectly that Kamito couldn't help but to compliment her.

"Wh-Wha-What are you saying!? Stop being an idiot!" Claire stammered cutely.

Kaatsu Claire blushed deep red, while *Pyun-Pyun* waving her whip around in agitation.

"Uwahh, Calm down!" Kamito pleaded.

"Wasn't it because you said some weird thing?"

"What I said was weird? I simply spoke the truth! I got it, I understand, so please stop pulling out your whip for every little thing."

Phew, if I didn't need her as a guide...but what a bothersome princess. Dodging the swinging whip, Kamito sighed in his mind.

****

The shrine that held the holy blade stood quietly in a clearing in the forest.

Claire easily removed the ward that forbade entry and stopped walking, then turned to Kamito.

"From here onwards it will be really dangerous, so, as a commoner, you should stay away."

"If you know that it's dangerous, why not stop?" Kamito asked.

"As I was saying, I need to contract with a strong spirit ." Claire calmly shook her head and stepped into the shrine.

Disregarding her warnings, Kamito followed her. As for coming all the way, it was true that he needed a guide , but more importantly he was just worried about Claire.

After all, sealed spirits were the strongest of the strong and at the same time have a wild nature. They prefer destruction and chaos; given the chance, they would even murder the elementalist that employs their power.

They are not something that can be managed by humans—that is why they have been sealed away.

Being only sixteen years of age with such an innate talent for wielding a spirit, Claire might as well be called a prodigy. However, if by any chance, she was to release the sealed spirit and fail to control it, what would happen ?

Although she was just a girl he met by chance, Kamito couldn't leave her alone.

"Why did you follow me? I cannot guarantee what will happen to you." Claire warned.

"Don't you have the absolute confidence to tame it?" Kamito snarkily answered.

"Of-Of course I do!"

"Then there's no problem if I come along." Kamito shrugged his shoulders, prompting Claire to turn away from him.

"....Suit yourself."

The inside of the shrine was misty and dark and had a heavy atmosphere. Claire frowned slightly at the smell of mold mingling in the air.

Flames, let there be light.

A tiny fireball immediately formed from Claire's fingertips; a basic spirit spell that draws on the power of a Flame Spirit. The flickering light of the fireball dimly illuminated the walls of the shrine. The shrine looked like a cavern filled with stalactites.

The sword was at the innermost area of the shrine.

"That is the sword that the sealed spirit resides in?" Kamito muttered. Claire nodded quietly in confirmation.

An unsheathed sword was standing hilt-up in a huge stone. It was an undoubtedly an antique which was most likely hundreds of years old but it had no rust on its length nor dents on its edge. Delicate ancient runes were engraved on the flat of the blade, radiating a dim blue light.

"A sword that has existed from even before the academy was founded, The Sacred Sword of Severian," Claire muttered reverently.

"The Sacred Sword of Severian? The one that slayed Demon King Solomon?" Kamito asked, shocked.

Demon King Solomon commanded seventy-two powerful spirits, brought chaos and destruction to the continent and was the only recorded male elementalist in history.

It was said that the one that slew the Demon King was the sword of Severian.

"Idiot, there's no way that's the real thing." Claire stated like she was amazed. "A Sacred Sword of Severian stabbed into a stone can be found everywhere in the Empire. Some remote villages even have one for the revitalization of the village. Anyhow, even if it is not the real deal, since it is a rune sword, there might be a powerful spirit sealed in it."

"...Indeed. Certainly, the real thing would not be in such a place..." Kamito finished.

Claire walked towards the sword determinedly.

"Hey..."

"You stay back." Claire snapped as she gestured to Kamito who had been approaching. Claire clenched the hilt of the holy blade.

"Don't strain yourself."

"...Got it."

Kamito decided to watch over Claire from the edge, where the light barely reached. The sealed spirit might be provoked by the presence of more than just one person. A heavy silence filled the surroundings.

"...Let's do this, Claire Rouge." Breathing deeply, Claire murmured to herself. Her voice trembled a bit; it seemed that she was nervous after all, Kamito noted.

Oh Noble Spirit Sealed in Ancient Holy Sword!

Thou Shall Accept Me as Thy Master and I Shall Be Thy Sheath!

From her cherry-red lips flew a fluent incantation for a contract ritual in spirit language. Her crimson hair stood on its ends. A crashing wind started to swirl inside the shrine.

Holding his breath, Kamito watched her intensely. Once the contract has been spoken and the spirit recognized Claire as its master, a spirit seal would be engraved somewhere on her body. The contract vows would then enter their conclusion. As he watched, a dreadful gust of wind swept through the shrine.

"...eh?" Kamito involuntarily stuttered.

Claire was unfazed, however, as she calmly recited her contract vow.

Dazzling light radiated from Severian's holy blade in her hand.

I can't....believe it, She was exchanging a contract with the sealed spirit!?

Preventing himself from being swept by the wind, an astonished Kamito was dumbstruck.

From the holy blade stabbed in the stone came an overwhelmingly tremendous amount of divine energy. If Claire was an average elementalist, she would have already passed out.

"Thrice I Command Thee, Exchange Vows With Me!"

Claire's vow reverberated inside the shrine in that instant.

Clink!

"Pulled-Pulled out. I pulled it out," she said.

"...What, seriously!?"

Brandishing the sword she pulled from the stone at her feet, Claire exclaimed her joy. However, in the next second—

The ancient runes engraved in Severian's blade suddenly shone violently!

"...huh!?"

Claire involuntarily released the blade from her hand —

The holy blade thrust itself back into the ground. With a flash, it blasted itself into bits.

"Kyaaaaah!"

A short shriek flew, then Claire collapsed onto the ground.

"Hey, are you okay!"

Kamito quickly ran towards Claire.

"Wha-What? What exactly has...."

Claire held her temple and slowly got up, then looked around restlessly.

"My-My sealed spirit?"

"Wait, I...can sense something terrible," Kamito warned.

Sweat was flowing intensely down the back of Kamito's neck. His face was showing the terror he felt as he looked up at the shrine's ceiling. Near the rock ceiling was the sword, swinging while floating in the air.

It's not the shattered holy sword. However, it was a rough steel blade that looked very sharp.

"Is that the sealed spirit of the sword!?" Claire asked.

"So it was of the sword spirit class. Looks like it is rather irritated," Kamito replied.

"How do you know so much? You are not even an elementalist!"

"It is plain to see. No matter how you look at it, that doesn't seem to be someone who pledges allegiance to his master."

"...Umm, indeed so." Claire meekly nodded uncharacteristically.

The floating sword slanted, pointed its tip downwards and suddenly became motionless.

Then—

"Get down!" In that instant Kamito pushed Claire down to the ground. A buzzing sound of an insect grazed his ear and continued past.

"Wai-Waa-Wait, where are you touching me!? I'll turn you into cinders!"

With her face deeply red, Claire beat on Kamito's chest repeatedly.

"Idiot, stop rampaging!" Kamito quickly moved his body away and looked in the direction that the sword spirit had flown to.

Fragments of rocks fell down with clattering sounds. The shrine's stalagmites had been cleanly sliced off.

"It is remarkable to be able to release a spirit of such rank—" Kamito glared with half opened eyes towards Claire. "...but the spirit has completely gone berserk."

"Shu-Shut up. The-The taming of it starts now."

"You...." Kamito was stupefied by her silliness, but he was in no situation to quarrel with her.

The spirit sword released a chattering noise while flying back towards them. Inside the shrine they couldn't move freely and even their range of sight was restricted.

Kamito grabbed Claire's hand and stood up. Touching each others' soft skin made Kamito's heart flutter but he did not show any reaction on his face.

"Hwaah."

"Stop making such cute reactions at every little thing. Let's flee," Kamito said.

"Wha.. whaa. whatt.. Cute.. what, me? Kyaa!"

"Let's run outside!"

Kamito grasped Claire's hand while they both ran in the direction of the shrine's exit.

The spirit sword did not immediately chase after them. Maybe it has not yet completely awakened. With this opportunity they might be able to run away.

The moment they were out of the shrine, the flash of the sword grazed in front of their eyes. Kamito's cut forelocks fell and danced in the breeze. The spirit sword let out a tremendous roar, decisively knocking down the surrounding trees in succession.

"Crazy! What a wild spirit, just like a certain princess I know," Kamito sighed.

"Alwa-Always, you're noisy..." Feeling slightly awkward, Claire deliberately coughed, then stood up. " What a rebellious child.....I'll give you a proper spanking later."

Her pair of crimson eyes were burning with a fierce determination, yet somehow she said some lines of provocation. Rolling up the fringe of her skirt, she then took out the leather whip coiled around her thigh, hitting it hard on the ground. Kamito's heart skipped a beat at the brief sight of her white underwear, but he said—

"Are you insane!? Your opponent is a high rank sealed spirit!"

"It will be an easy victory. Amateurs like you please stay back!"

"Where are you getting all of your confidence? Whatever, let's run away!"

Claire shook off Kamito's hand that was grabbing her wrist. "No, you escape yourself. I will absolutely make this spirit mine."

"You, for what reason—do you need a strong spirit that badly?"

".....You will never understand." Claire averted her eyes.

"I need...power, I need a powerful spirit that will not lose to any other spirit!"

Guardian of the crimson blaze, keeper of undying hearth!

Now's the time to abide by the blood contract, come forth and do my bidding!

Claire recited the summoning spell of her Flame Spirit. A crimson flame surged and she was engulfed by an intense heat.

"The hunting begins, Scarlet!"

Together with scorching flames a red Hell Cat appeared. Instead of fur, it was blazing with scarlet-colored flames that were wrapped around the beast's body.

Is that the real form of her flame spirit!? Kamito wondered.

Indeed, she was not all talk. She truly is a prodigy.

For a spirit to be manifested in beast form is proof that it is a high ranking spirit. Scarlet might just be an affectionate name, perhaps it was not the true name of the spirit. Without a doubt, it was a high ranking spirit that carries a true name.

Claire wielded her whip, the hell cat growled with a frightful roar and then rushed towards the sword spirit. Dancing sparks scattered and the atmosphere trembled at the roar of the beast. The floating spirit sword spun towards the Hell Cat, cutting the trees in its way.

"Scarlet, go get it!"

In response to Claire's shout, the Hell Cat leaped. High above the floating sword it jumped and its sharp blazing claws swung down at the sword. With a high pitched shrill sound, intense sparks scattered from the contact and the spirit sword dropped to the ground.

Claire ran at the same time. It was not a fatal hit. The spirit sword rose and flew back into the air in a split second, rolling over itself while drawing an arc in the air.

The flame spirit chased after it, trying not to let it escape. Roaring loudly, it made a great leap again.

Violent sparks scattered once again. Claire struck hard at the ground with her leather whip, slowly pressing forward against the sword spirit. It looked like the leather whip was not meant for battle, rather for signaling instructions to the spirit.

At the fierce attacks of Scarlet, the spirit sword's movement stopped—At that instant,

"Eat this!" ***Searing Fireball!***

Claire released a huge fire ball from her palm.

Fireball is a high level fire spirit magic spell that uses ultra-hot flames and can terribly burn up the object of its ire, leaving it completely traceless and unrecognizable. The spell's power is determined by the elementalist's own divine energy and the contracted spirit's strength in combination.

The released fireball drew an arch in the air, then exploded in a blast that even Scarlet was caught in. The shockwave of the explosion knocked down the trees in the immediate surroundings and fallen tree trunks radiated from the explosion center.

What terrible power... Kamito thought. As he shielded himself from the flying stones that were blown into the air by the spell, Kamito marveled at the power exhibited by Claire.

Such power was not one that would normally be in the hands of one so young.

Inside the swirling fire, the Hell Cat's figure reared. Naturally, the Hell Cat cannot possibly be harmed by a blazing fire because of its base nature.

The spirit sword hovered motionlessly in the air. It seemed that it had not received any damage either. Naturally, Claire didn't think that she would bring down a high ranking spirit with just spirit magic, but she should be able to get its attention.

"Scarlet!" Claire exclaimed.

The flame spirit's claws attacked the spirit sword again . Its scourging hot claws could melt normal steel. If its opponent were an average spirit, it would be instantly eradicated. However, the spirit sword quickly moved to intercept the claws and the attack was stopped by the steel edge of the blade.

In an instant, the strange sound of metal-on-metal scratching reverberated in the trembling atmosphere.

"Wh...What?...." Kamito suppressed both his ears with his hands.

Receiving the full impact of the sound, Claire's face distorted from pain and she crouched down.

The spirit sword had released a weird sound and then transformed. Its shape changed from an average long sword to that of a huge bastard sword in a flash.

"What!?"

Claire's flame spirit took an unexpected strike, it couldn't avoid the big swing of the large sword. The Hell Cat's body was severed into two and it vanished into the void together with its flames.

With only one hit, Scarlett had lost the strength to manifest in this world.

...Damn! Isn't this thing in a completely different league? It seems that it has finally completely awakened. Kamito cursed, then glanced at Claire—

Claire had collapsed on the ground, and her stunned blank eyes were fixed upward at the void where the flame spirit had disappeared.

Having finished off the flame spirit in one swing, the spirit sword aimed its next attack at Claire.

The huge bastard sword flew at the crouching girl—

"Claire!" Kamito shouted, and started to run. Without reason, his own body just moved before he knew it.

"Aaaaaaaaaaaaaah!"

Diving in front of Claire, he thrust his palm toward the bastard sword. Not his left hand enclosed by the leather glove – it was his right hand.

...No choice but to do this!

Oh Noble Spirit Sealed in Thy Ancient Holy Sword!

Thou Shall Accept Me as Thy Master and I Shall Be Thy Sheath!

Sweat rushed down from his forehead as he started to recite the incantation for spirit contracts, one which he had sworn to never utter again. The spinning tip of the sword pierced the skin of his palm. Red blood gushed intensely from it.

...Gwaah, Gah!

Crushing amounts of divine energy swirled around him, the gravel and dirt surrounding them whirled up from the strength of the wind. He almost lost consciousness from the sharp pain, but he knew that if he fainted, Claire, who was behind him, would surely be cut in half.

Thrice I Command Thee!

"...No way, a Spirit Contract!?" A surprised sound came from Claire's throat.

Kamito's heels sank into the ground. The sound of his breaking bones resounded underneath his scalp.

Exchange Vows With Me!

Withstanding the terrible sharp pain, Kamito finished the last words of the contract ritual.

Instantly, the body of the spirit sword radiated with a pale blue light.

What!?

Intense flashes of light and thunderous sounds crashed into his brain.

Part 4

He slowly opened his eyes and found Claire Rouge's face in his vision. Draped onto his face was her twintailed hair.

It seemed that she was shouting something but he couldn't hear it clearly. Probably the sound blasts from the spirit had messed up his ears.

...Looks like I'm still alive.

Wearily lying on the ground, Kamito let out a breath of relief. The chance of success against a spirit of such rank was very low, but it looked like his gamble had paid off.

Raising his eyebrow, he grimaced from the pain that crashed throughout his whole body and raised his right hand slowly.

In his right hand which had been stabbed by the spirit sword-instead of a wound, an emblem of two swords crossing each other had been engraved upon it.

It was the proof of the spirit contract—the spirit seal.

Aah, I did it... Kamito murmured as he stared at the carved seal on the back of his hand.

A sharp sense of guilt bit at his heart. He had broken the promise with *her*...

However, in order to save Claire, it had been the only method with any degree of success.

Claire noticed that Kamito had woken up; her hands were at the nape of his neck and her face moved closer to

his, so close that he could feel her breath. With her clear crimson eyes, she stared at Kamito. Her cherry-colored lips trembled weakly.

"...Why? You're a male. How can you contract a spirit!?"

Kamito did not answer and slowly stood up. Not used to being ignored, the annoyed Claire raised her eyebrows.

"My-My sword spirit!?"

"My bad. Just a moment ago, I contracted with it." Kamito sighed and showed her the back of his right hand where the spirit seal had been engraved.

"Wha-Whaa-Wha-Whaaaat!" Claire wore a stunned expression with her mouth wide open.

Well, a natural reaction to the situation, I guess...

Kamito felt a faint ache in his heart. Of course, he could clearly understand such a response from Claire. Originally, contracting with a spirit was a privilege that was granted to none other than pure maidens.

The history of males whom could contract spirits belonged solely to one person historically. This male brought chaos and destruction to the world and so he was called the Demon King Elementalist.

It would be natural for Claire to fear him, since he was a male who could tap the same power of spirit contracts as the Demon King.

Kamito stood up and quietly turned around.

He did not regret the contract. This was the only way he could think of that would have allowed him to save Claire.

Kamito was about to leave, but a voice called him from behind.

"Wait, wait I say!"

Turning around, he saw that Claire, with her hands on her hips, was glaring intensely at him.

"You stole...my spirit...take responsibility for it!"

"Huh?" Kamito frowned...It didn't make any sense to him.

At such a reaction from Kamito, Claire impatiently brushed her twintail.

"I should have been the one to have obtained that spirit, so I am saying that you have to take responsibility for denying me the spirit."

"Responsibility?"

Responsibility is a very heavy word. Because of that unexpected word, Kamito had become even more confused.[2]

...What was the girl saying?

"Therefore...."

Claire snapped her whip and then she pointed her index finger toward Kamito.

"You have to become my contracted spirit!"

Chapter 2: Areishia Spirit Academy

Part 1

Areishia Spirit Academy.

In this institution, all the princess maidens from across the empire are gathered and trained into full-fledged elementalists.

With a beautiful garden behind its castle walls, the school building, lined with elegant spires seemed very much like the palace of a princess. —In fact, this was nearly entirely correct. Out of all the students attending this academy, almost all of them are genuine and proper noble ladies.

"However, to unexpectedly have such a terrible encounter..."

Kamito muttered to himself as he walked along the red carpet covered hallway on the second floor of the school building.

"Lost inside the forest, I wound up contracted to a sealed spirit, and furthermore..."

Since Kamito snatched the sealed spirit from her, that crimson haired young girl apparently had her eyes on him.

After that—Claire Rouge guided Kamito to the academy school building.

That was good, but apparently her claim that Kamito was to become her personal contracted spirit was serious. Round and round, the whip was coiled around Kamito. Rather than being guided, it might be more appropriate to say that he was being dragged, and they walked through the forest in that fashion.

Regardless, Kamito had no obligation to play along with the princess. Taking the opportunity when Claire went to the restroom, he unwound the whip and escaped .

"Ah, you escaped, you traitor!"

Such a voice can be heard from inside the restroom—

(What? What made you think I wouldn't run away...)

That young girl was an outstanding elementalist, but her common knowledge of society was that of a naive lady.

"Anyways, before I am found by that girl again, I need to hurry up and meet Greyworth."

Proceeding down the hallway, Kamito let out a small sigh.

... Depressed.

After all, so far nothing good had ever resulted from getting involved with that witch.

(... But, I can't ignore this.)

Kamito took out a sheet of paper from his breast pocket.

Forty days ago, he had received a letter from Headmistress Greyworth.

If, what was written on it is true—

He might finally get some clues about that girl.

Nevertheless, Kamito could not deny the possibility that it was just some bait to lure him here.

(... It is useless to ponder on it. After all, the other party is that Witch.)

And, here Kamito stopped in his tracks.

In front of him was the thick, wooden front door: the Headmistress' Office.

As Kamito was about to knock on the door—

"Headmistress, I can't agree with this!"

Suddenly, a voice could be heard from inside the room .

A high pitched, young girl's alto voice.

It seemed that they were occupied currently.

(... It can't be helped, I'll kill some time outside for a while.)

While Kamito was moving away from the door—

"Why should we welcome the likes of a man to this sacred academy of princess maidens?!"

He stopped his foot steps...

(...Mm, man?)

That perked up his ears.

"Because I said that we need him here. Isn't that reason enough for you?"

It was a constrained voice. But, it carried so much power that Kamito trembled even hearing it through the door. What a fearful voice from the witch no matter how many times one hears it.

"Ar-Are you suggesting that we lack the strength?"

"Nonsense. I'm not belittling the power of your chivalric orders, but, **He is special**"

"... You mean the fact that he can communicate with a spirit despite being male?"

"Yes, but that is not all of it."

"What do you mean—"

And, the girl suddenly closed her mouth.

Silence fell for a brief moment. Then—

"Who is there?!"

(Darn it.) Apparently they'd noticed that someone was eavesdropping.

Kamito quickly attempted to leave—

Bang – suddenly, the office door was violently opened.

From the door which was kicked open, there appeared —

With a beautiful slender leg which was swung up high , a pony tailed beautiful young girl.

A pair of sharp, long eyes. A dignified, handsome feature.

She wore a silver breastplate on top of her uniform, and it looked like the outfit of a valiant knight.

Inside the leaf pleated skirt, a pair of lace underwear flew into his sight.

"Black!?"

"Wha... Y-You, Insolent Person!"

The young girl kicked Kamito with her whole strength in his stomach which caused him to involuntarily blurt out.

"Guoh!"

The sudden attack caught him off guard, blowing Kamito away.

In an instant, the young girl shortened the distance between them and pressed Kamito down on the floor, unsheathing the blade at her hip.

Then she thrust it violently, pointing the edge of her blade onto his cheek.

"..."

Shooting a cold piercing look.

Then, those clear, reddish-brown colored eyes widened.

"You... are you... actually a man!?"

The stern face of the girl blushed and became bright red.

That time—

"Fnn, aren't you quite behind schedule, Kazehaya Kamito?"

A displeased voice came from the back of the office.

Kamito, who was still being held down by the young girl, slowly raised his eyes.

Over there—there was the figure of a witch completely unchanged from three years ago.

Her ash-blonde hair was gently waving.

Her beauty extolled the seductiveness of an alluring adult.

Beneath her small pair of glasses, her eyes, the same gray as the color of her hair, were staring in his direction.

(... So you came out, witch!)

Kamito spat out bitterly in his head.

Dusk Witch—Greyworth Ciel Mais.

With the appearance of a bewitching, carnivorous, beautiful woman, she was an experienced Spirit Knight that boasted the title of being one of the twelve Knight Generals of the Empire.

The rumor that the highest ranked elementalist may transcend her age might have been real.

"—It has been three years, Kamito. Looking at your face, it seems you have changed."

"... You just don't change, Dusk Witch."

To the sarcastic response while he was still pressed down on his back, the witch let out a smile.

"Kazehaya Kamito!? Then, this guy..."

The ponytail young girl raised her eyebrow.

"Hey, isn't it about time that you let go of me?"

Kamito squinted his eyes and murmured towards the young girl sitting on his chest.

"What is that? You shameless, rude person!"

"After all, I am saying it for your own sake."

"... What do you mean?"

"Well, how to say it... since some time ago, your thigh has been touching my body."

Her moderately tight thigh felt soft. It was a pity that he had to point that out, but it wasn't rubbing so much that he would enjoy the side benefits under such a situation either.

"......~Wa!?"

The stern young girl's face blushed burning hot red.

Standing up quickly while holding down her skirt, she swung down her blade mercilessly.

Within a hair's breadth, Kamito dodged it by twisting his body.

"Wha-What are you doing!?"

"You-You indecent... I will make you into a marinated salmon, in an instant!"

"Wait, calm down! I'm not a salmon!"

Zing— a sharp slash, Kamito's forelock was cut.

Serious. Not even a shred of doubt in her eyes.

(... Um, in this one day, how many times have I almost been killed?)

An unlucky day. Or is it because of the curse of the Dusk Witch.

(Are all the girls of the academy like this?)

Being driven to the wall. Kamito felt the seriousness of the threat to his life—at that time.

"Sheath your blade, Ellis. Any personal struggle in this academy is prohibited."

"... Uh!"

Greyworth's voice called out, the girl named Ellis stopped instantly.

"H-Headmistress... I'm just—"

"Do I need to say the same thing twice? Ellis Fahrengart."

"... No, um, I apologize."

Ellis, while glaring intensely at Kamito, reluctantly sheathed her blade.

Greyworth pushed up her glasses and then smiled.

"So, you are already at that age. Well, to be pushed down by Ellis' delicate body hidden under the armor, most boys would not be able to control themselves."

"H-Headmistress!?"

"Wait, please don't say anything that will cause a misunderstanding! I'm—"

Kamito quickly objected. But, his eyes unintentionally went in the direction of Ellis' breasts—

... Indeed. She was wearing her armor so it was hard to tell, but certainly, Claire Rouge's pitiful breasts were incomparable to hers.

"Y-You, w-where are you looking to!"

"My bad..."

Kamito quickly averted his eyes.

"Guh, if you weren't the headmistress' guest, I'd have made you into a Pot-au-feu already!"

"... Why a Pot-au-feu!"

Although he didn't understand her metaphor, it sounded scary.

"Ellis, you can go now. It's unpleasant to have people flirt in front of my eyes."

Greyworth's cold voice informed her.

"I-I can't leave you alone in the same room with... this man. If he impudently lusts towards the headmistress..."

"There is no such thing!"

Kamito interrupted strongly. ... What was this girl saying?

"Well, it does not matter if that's the case. I'm always wearing my lucky underwear."

"What..."

"Mm, Your face became red, boy, quite cute. By the way the color is—"

"I don't want to hear it!"

"Just kidding. Why are you blushing?"

"Guah!"

The Dusk Witch giggled with pleasure, Kamito directed looks filled with killing intent towards her.

"B-But, the headmistress should not to be alone together with such a guy without guard—"

"Ellis Fahrengart."

To that calm tone of voice , Ellis' shoulders trembled.

"Do I need to repeat what I am saying twice?"

"Um, I apologize!"

Greyworth, how frightening; with her voice trembling, Ellis nodded, and left the hallway swiftly.

Part 2

Finally released, Kamito stood up letting out a sigh of relief.

Brushing the dirt from his coat, he set foot inside the office.

After Kamito closed the door behind him, Greyworth shrugged her shoulders.

"She is the daughter of the ducal House of Fahrengart. An excellent knight, but somewhat stubborn."

"Is that girl a student here, too? She was wearing armor on top of her uniform."

"She is the leader of the Sylphid Knights, a party which manages any disturbances to the order of the academy."

"Like a public morals committee. In that case, they should manage it more strictly."

Kamito remembered, what happened inside the forest when he met the crimson haired young girl.

... To leave her at large was bad, in all sorts of ways.

"Fu, I'll take that into consideration. By the way Kamito, why are you so grimy. As if you were attacked in the Spirit Forest?"

".....No, I was scratched by a cat. A tomboyish hell cat girl."

Kamito answered impatiently with a bitter face, and Greyworth shrugged her shoulders again.

"You'd better be careful, rumors say that within the inner depths of the Spirit Forest that even the Spirit Investigation Committee would not enter, are S-rank

spirits still slumbering. Once you encounter one, your life is forfeited—in your case, can you manage to tame it?"

"Please stop. I don't want to associate myself with an S-rank spirit again."

"Yeah. **As you are now**, you would probably be a mincemeat in five seconds."

"Not even one second. Actually, with a contracted spirit I might last for seven seconds."

"Fu— **with a contracted spirit**?"

Greyworth directed her grayish eyes towards Kamito's right hand.

"That wound? Is **that** also a scratch by the cat?"

"This is—"

The wound—on the right hand, that was where the spirit seal was engraved a while ago.

Kamito clicked his tongue inwardly—No, after all he couldn't possibly hide it from the Dusk Witch.

"Well, how to say it. It is just happenstance. I made a contract with a particular sealed spirit. It was ultra-violent, had I failed the contract, I would not be standing here right now."

"Ha, what a change of heart, that you have contracted with a spirit other than **her**."

The grayish eyes, inside the glasses, glistened sharply.

"Finally you decided to say farewell to that ghost, is that it?"

"... Guh!"

At that mocking tone, Kamito couldn't help but get agitated.

"She is not a ghost! She is..."

Kamito took out the paper in his coat's pocket, then slapped it onto the front desk.

The beautiful witch did not waver in the slightest. A detestable calmness.

Kamito bit his lips, then asked Greyworth.

"This, you sent this to me. Is it true?"

"Ah, it's true. Witches don't tell lies."

"It was... Indeed, you haven't told a lie. But, you've never spoken the truth either."

Kamito spat out what he wanted to say.

"... Well whatever. Tell me what you know."

"Oh boy, Is that the attitude of someone asking a witch ? You were cuter three years ago."

"The cat changed into a tiger in three years. Do not think it will stay as your pet forever."

"A cat does not change into a tiger and never will."

Greyworth intentionally shrugged her shoulders and fixedly looked into Kamito's eyes.

Kamito was involuntarily overcome by the pressure of that overbearing stare.

"The thing written there is true. **Your contracted spirit is alive**."

"... Guh!"

Kamito swallowed his breath.

A Witch does not speak the truth. But, she never tells a lie either.

"Her... Restia, where is she now?"

Kamito raised his voice, leaning his body onto the office desk.

The witch without moving her eyebrow, thrust a bundle of documents to the tip of Kamito's nose.

"... What are these?"

"Agreement Terms. Sign here."

"This doesn't make any sense. What do you mean?"

"There is nothing you couldn't understand. For what purpose do you think I summoned you here? Did you take it that I, the Dusk Witch, will simply let you have the information out of goodwill?"

"I understand fully that you have nothing but malice."

Kamito snatched the bundle of documents, then slapped it onto the desk.

Bundled with a clip, Areishia Spirit Academy's Admission Notification.

It was written there. No doubt—Kamito's **public** Background Profile.

"What kind of a joke is this?"

"Today you will be admitted into the academy. Don't worry, I've already taken care of all the necessary procedures."

"How can I be calm! What do you mean by this, explain!"

"I need you. That's all."

"What?"

The witch's words were always unexpected. Like a midsummer breeze.

"What are you talking about? I mean, this academy is a garden of pure maidens."

"No problem. Such a thing is no big deal with my authority."

"That would be a problem in itself! **Now is Different from Three Years Ago.**"

Provoked by Kamito—

"Don't get the wrong idea, Boy. You don't have any right to choose."

Greyworth told him in a shockingly cold voice.

"... Gu!"

"Till now I have allowed you to roam freely. Originally , the elementalist must be managed by the organization. You know that, right?"

"That is—"

In the Ordesia Empire, elementalists are given various privileges, but in exchange they must be registered with the organization. If there exist stray elementalists that harbor ideologies that are against the empire, it will be extremely dangerous to the nation.

"They will sniff out your existence sooner or later. Don't underestimate the country's Spirit Knights, we don't know how it would have been three years ago, but with your current slump you will lose for sure; besides—"

Then, a demonic grin floated from Greyworth.

"There's a slight chance that I might carelessly blab out the secret."

"... What carelessly? In short this is blackmail."

"It helps a lot that you understand so quickly."

"So shameless."

Kamito threw a loathsome comment, Greyworth as if in regret shrugged her shoulders.

"Fu, why are you so dissatisfied? One man in an institution of maidens where real princesses are gathered . Isn't it like a marvelous luxury harem?"

"Oh, please, I'm—"

"If you like, you may take one student from the academy and do whatever you like to her. For example, Ellis Fahrengart from earlier—who is seriously stubborn, but she is of the type to become ultra obedient once well trained. I am sure she will respond to whatever perverted radical play you have in mind."

"Am I a sex deviant?!"

"A joke. There is no way that I have such authority."

"I can never understand your jokes..."

Kamito moaned holding his temple.

"Why did you summon me now? What do you plan to do with me?"

"Glad that we can get to the point directly."

"Since it is useless to oppose a Witch."

A casual reply, Greyworth let out a smile—

"In two months, the Blade Dance will be held in Astral Zero. I have put you up as an entrant there."

"What did you say?"

—Blade Dance.

Once every few years, it is the largest Kagura[3] ritual carried out in Astral Zero.

Elementalists gather from the continent, and perform Blade Dance as an offering for the Five Great Elemental Lords.

So to speak, it's a grand martial battle festival of fellow elementalists.

The country of the victorious team will be given a few years of divine protection by the Elemental Lords, a guaranteed prosperity for the country. Together with a general assembly for the champion—

A single Wish will be granted.

"Win the cup, Kamito. Nevertheless, **as of now** it might be impossible for you."

"I—"

Kamito bit his lips, strongly clenching his fist.

Not his right hand where the spirit seal was engraved—It was his left hand covered by the black leather glove.

Zukiri, A sharp pain ran through his chest.

"I-I have decided that I will never participate in the Blade Dance again."

"No, you will compete. Otherwise, there will be trouble."

Greyworth placed both of her hands onto the office desk, calmly shaking her head.

"Because, nobody but you can win against the Strongest Blade Dancer."

"Wh... at...!?"

The moment that he heard that name, Kamito's face froze.

The Strongest—the elementalists that are given this title, currently, there was only one in the whole continent .

Three years ago, a mere fourteen year old young girl dominated the Blade Dance's individual matches.

"—That is right. **She** has returned."

Greyworth's grayish pair of eyes, peered into those of Kamito's.

"The Strongest Blade Dancer—Ren Ashbell."

Chapter 3: My Classmate is a Princess

Part 1

Stubborn footsteps resounded in the academy hallway.

A sleeved uniform had been provided directly to Kamito, who was following the swaying ponytail.

The uniform Greyworth prepared was custom-designed for his personal use. The fundamental color was the same as that of the other students, pure white, but the dress below it was certainly not a skirt. The cloth of his pants, which was incorporated with holiness, was worn nicely like a gentleman.

(Damn, the size is perfect...she knew it from the very beginning.)

Kamito cursed Greyworth in his head.

"The instructors' building and the students' building are connected on the second floor's hallway. The cafeteria is located on the first floor."

Guiding him through the school building was the girl from before, Ellis Fahrengart.

While Kamito was changing into his uniform, Greyworth seemed to have summoned her.

At first, she openly showed a displeased face, but maybe because of her serious personality, she did not abandon him midway and dutifully continued to guide him.

The school building's design was recklessly complex and in order to create a comfortable space for spirits, it has adopted the standard of the latest spirit engineering architectural style. Anyway, it was definitely a design that had given little consideration for the people using it.

Staring at Ellis' swaying ponytail, Kamito recalled the conversation from earlier. In the end, although he wasn't pleased that things had gone the way the witch had predicted—

Hearing **that name**, which was mentioned, Kamito was left with no other choice.

Ren Ashbell—suddenly appeared three years ago, The Strongest Blade Dancer.

And, that Ren Ashbell's contracted spirit is—

A dark spirit in the form of a young girl.

"..."

While walking, Kamito dropped his gaze to his left hand which was covered with a leather glove.

(...No, it can't be her. Because, she is—)

Kamito shook his head. Trying to deny it rationally—but could it be... mixed thoughts were in his mind.

(...Well whatever. I'll make sure of it with my own eyes . For now I'll dance in your palm, Greyworth.)

"You..."

Then Ellis, who was walking in front of him, suddenly stopped.

Facing him with her hand on her waist, she sternly scowled at Kamito.

"Are you listening or what? It's for your own sake that I'm explaining these things."

"...Um, my bad. I was thinking of something."

"Mm, thinking of something?"

For some reason, Ellis' face became red, and she quickly walked towards him.

"Y-You, what kind of things were you thinking while looking at my back!"

"W-Wait, Don't swing your blade here!"

The blade was swung at point blank range, and Kamito quickly dodged it.

(Perhaps... this girl is also...)

It appeared that it was a common problem that all the students of this academy had no immunity to men.

Maybe the reason that she was walking so fast since before, was because she was conscious of the fact that Kamito was a man.

"Listen, don't misunderstand anything! I have not accepted you. I'm guiding you because I have no choice, but to comply with the headmistress' orders!"

"Ah, I get it. But don't treat me like an enemy either. As of today I'm a student of this academy like you."

"I'll never accept you. The fact that there is a man such as you who is an elementalist, there is no way I would accept it!"

Returning on her heels, Ellis began to walk quickly.

"All things considered, why would the headmistress want a man transferred here..."

...It seemed that he was being disliked a lot.

(Well, it can't be helped. This is my fate as the only man in this garden of maidens.)

It's as if a lion had been released on a herd of rabbits.

Naturally, the overly boxed princesses would be wary of a man of the same age.

The Blade Dance will be held two months later.

He had to obtain their trust gradually in this school life .

(Hmm, yeah. Speaking of life.)

Suddenly, something came to his mind.

"Hey, Ellis."

"What."

Ellis turned around in a sullen mood.

He thought she might rage because of him calling her by her first name so casually, but apparently she didn't.

"From today onwards, where should I live?"

There was no male dormitory in this academy, and there's no way that he would be given a room in the female dormitory. Would that mean commuting to the school from the academic city at the foot of the mountain ?

"Don't worry about it, the academy has prepared a splendid lodge at great expense for you. A part of the endowment had been especially allocated for the construction cost."

"What a strangely thorny way of speaking."

...Well whatever. It's certainly better than being homeless or living outside in the Spirit Forest.

"It can be seen from this window—there it is."

Kamito looked in the direction Ellis was pointing at.

"...Um, where is it?"

Looking around the vast grounds, it seems he can't find any lodging house there.

"Look well, over there at the corner of the plaza square "

Ellis was pointing towards—

"That's... my house?"

A splendid building with a large roof.

More spacious than an ordinary residence house, there were many rooms inside.

Beside it was an exclusive bathing area. Mangers have been piled up near its entrance.

"Is-Isn't that a stable!"

Kamito yelled loudly.

"Are those eye sockets empty? Look closely."

"What?"

(Um, am I seeing something wrong?)

He only saw the stable.

No, it was a stable at best. After all, they are soothing their horses in that place.

(Mm?)

—And then, Kamito finally discovered it.

Next to the stable, where wooden planks had been put together and were erected, there was actually a lodge.

Here and there, different lengths of planks had been nailed down together.

The roof was flaky. A sudden gust of strong wind would destroy such a lodge.

"Ah, maybe—that one?"

"Yeah."

Ellis simply nodded.

"Where's the splendid lodge! It seems like it has been built in three days!"

"Three hours. Do not underestimate the power of my contracted spirit."

"You built it?! I mean, wasn't it built at a high price?"

"A high price indeed, I wasted my time because of you . Are you unsatisfied?"

"I'm full of dissatisfaction. It's almost harassment towards me."

"There's a proper bed, made of straw."

"I'm getting the same treatment as a horse..."

"Fu, You have a strong sense of pride. Of course a horse is more worthy of caring for than you."

With the ponytail at her nape brushing on her shoulder, Ellis said clearly.

Somehow, he wanted to cry.

"The restroom? The bath?"

"You can use the back of the lodge as restroom. Unfortunately, you'll need to share the bath."

"Shared bath... with the horses."

Kamito grumbled.

"Are you complaining?" Ellis scowled at him.

"Look, even in the highly unlikely event that you try to invade the academy's restroom, my contracted spirit would turn you into a sauté mushroom."

"Sounds delicious. So, you really like to cook?"

"Yes, It's a hobby. Someday an ideal gentleman will take my hands for marriage, and to please him with my cooking, I'm usually training for it."

"Really, um, if there is a chance, please let me try it too. At least, I have a fine palate."

"Yes. If there's a chance, I would like to demonstrate my proud cooking... What? Who are you to think that I would do something like that for you!?"

Zing— In a flash the blade was swung, and Kamito dodged it by a thin margin.

"...You. Forget about cooking, these are not the kind of hands for marriage—"

"Uh..."

Kamito retorted with half an eye closed. Maybe being self-conscious, Ellis quickly glanced away.

"Another thing, being the leader of the knights, aren't you messing up the order the most?"

"Shu-Shut up. It was because you said something strange!"

Kamito shrugged his shoulders, then turned towards the corridor again.

"Let's leave the topic of the dormitory for now. Where's my classroom?"

"The Raven class. Where extraordinary problematic children are gathered, a perfect class for you."

"Extraordinary problematic children?"

"It's exactly as it sounds. ...Mm, Why are you looking so bitter?"

"No, I happen to know something about it."

Kamito remembered in his head, the crimson haired young girl he encountered inside the forest.

Seriously? No way! —That stroke of uneasiness, he couldn't shake it away.

"Are you also from the Raven Class?"

Kamito tentatively asked a question.

The term "extraordinary problematic child" fit this young girl perfectly.

"As if... I'm from the superior class Weasel!"

In an instant, the sword was swung in a flash.

Kamito was expecting it this time, and only the forelocks had slightly been cut.

"...T-The Fahrengart secret sword skill was fended off."

"....As such, don't casually swing at me with your hidden sword skills!"

Climbing up the staircase and walking through the long corridor, Kamito finally saw his classroom.

A large wooden double leaf door with an abstract spirit shaped carving was there.

Areishia Spirit Academy's classrooms were arranged a floor apart from each other. Because classrooms close to each other would likely duel or create some other commotion immediately.

"All the students attending here are princesses from noble families. There are some who hold a grudge against each other. Although, as a regulation of the academy, personal disputes are prohibited; frequent incidents like dueling have never stopped."

While sighing, Ellis clasped her fist strongly.

"We the Sylphid Knights will protect this peaceful academy from the perpetrators."

"No, the one who is disturbing this peace is you—"

—Was what he was about to say, but Kamito shut his own mouth.

As she spoke, the side of Ellis' face was extremely serious.

He thought that she was a reckless girl who swung her blade on every occasion—his impression of her changed a little.

She possesses the pride of a knight.

The **male elementalist**, whose mere existence would bring disturbance to the academy.

From the point of view of the leader of the knights, who maintains public morals, she naturally couldn't accept Kamito.

Despite all of it, she could sincerely face and talk to him.

A bit stubborn, but at heart, she was honorable.

"...Hm, why are you glaring at my face?"

Ellis suspiciously frowned her eyebrows.

"Well, I'm sorry for the various teasing from some time ago."

"...? Wh-Why you, suddenly!"

Her embarrassed reaction seemed somehow strangely cute.

Part 2

Looking inside the large auditorium classroom, no one was there. During this time everyone was out. Perhaps they are all engaged in practical training outside in the training field area.

"It's okay from here, I'll hear the rest later from my classmates. Thanks for your guidance."

"Fu, such gratitude is unnecessary. If there was a failure to properly guide you, **you might deliberately lose your way** to the toilet later."

"You really have no faith in me....."

At this comparatively caustic line from the departing Ellis, Kamito let out a deep sigh.

Judging from his experience so far on the first day, it would be a tall order to gain the trust of his classmates.

While muttering, Kamito stepped into the empty classroom.

Then, at that moment *swoosh* a slash sounded in the air—

"Gueh!"

A whip forcefully coiled around Kamito's neck.

Being caught by the rough sudden attack, he had been pulled and thrown down in the corridor.

(Wh-What!?)

Cough Looking around himself while coughing—

"Kazehaya Kamito!"

Over his head, a familiar voice of a young girl descended upon him.

...Honestly, a voice he didn't want to hear.

"Y-Yo-You have escaped from me, despite being my contracted spirit!"

"Hugh, ug"

"Defying me!"

"Guh!"

Feigning ignorance and trying to whistle, the thing around his neck tightened.

(This sucks.....)

Thrown down flat onto his back, in front of Claire—

A blazing red haired beautiful young girl with her folded arms looking down to Kamito.

The blowing winds from the window caused her uniform's pleated skirt to float in the air.

"Claire, you...."

A deep groan came from Kamito's throat.

"What, do you intend to reason your way out?"

"No, from here, I can slightly see your panties."

"Wha!"

Claire's face blushed, then she quickly restrained her skirt.

"Pe-Pe-Pe-Pervert~!"

Gogogogogogogogogo.....!

A heat haze was rising from Claire's body.

No. It was not a heat haze. It was a completely burning Astral Zero's flame.

"It seems, you really want to be turned into cinders, Kamito?"

"Wai-Wait, not yet!"

Kamito felt that his life was seriously in danger, and quickly shook his head.

"Black is too early for you."

".....gu!"

Strike— then Claire's whole body solidified.

From her neck to the tip of her ears, it turned deep red liked boiled octopus—

"It-It's not black! It is always white, black is....rarely, what have you made me say, idiot!"

Fwump. .....She seemed to have overheated.

Losing her strength, she sunk down to the floor.

Being overly boxed into an ideal princess was her greatest weakness.

.....Is it really okay for an elementalist to be so naive?

"Uugh, this is the second time..... I can't become a bride anymore"

With both of her knees on the floor, Claire began weeping gloomily.

.....Somewhat, it looked like he had done something terrible.

"My bad....don't cry, ok?"

Kamito stood up, then approached Claire while she glared at him.

.....Frightening. She could have burnt a person with merely her glare.

She wiped her tears with her uniform sleeve, then clenched her leather whip tightly.

"Kazehaya Kamito."

"Wh-What?"

"I-I'm quite generous, so I'll give you one chance to explain."

Although her tone was calm, obviously her voice was trembling.

.....Extremely angry.

"Earlier, why did you escape?"

"No, it's common sense that I would think of escaping.
"

Kamito unintentionally replied immediately.

An answer—that he immediately regretted.

"......I got it. There's only death for a fugitive slave."

"Wa-Wait, calm down. From a spirit, I have become a slave?!"

"Slave, you're my **slave spirit**!"

"A new species of spirit was born. How about announcing it to the Spirit Research Agency?"

By the way, in whichever Spirit Forest of the continent, these species of spirit were yet to be discovered.

"Ch-Cheeky slave—No, a slave spirit isn't it!"

"Uwah, I gi.....give, give up, seriously I'll die!"

Forcefully, the whip on his neck ruthlessly tightened, and his consciousness was likely to fly away.

(The knight group, what are they doing! A murder is about to happen inside the academy!)

Looking around in the corridor with no sign of any student.

"By the way—"

Then, Claire's face got closer. Looking rather displeased, she said,

"Sometime ago, you were speaking with the knight group's Ellis Fahrengart, **you seemed to be getting along well with her**. What does that mean?"

Cough, "How could you call that getting along together? She was just guiding me."

"Guide? Why?"

"Because today, I have specially transferred into this academy."

"What?..... You have transferred? Here at Areishia Spirit Academy?"

Claire spread open her eyes, then looked to Kamito's uniformed figure, which she only just noticed now.

"No way....you are a man!"

"Aa. But, you have seen me contracting a spirit."

Kamito nodded, then showed his right hand where the spirit seal was imprinted.

"I'm a **male elementalist**. That's why Greyworth summoned me here. "

"....."

Therefore, Claire—

Lost in thought, she put her finger on her cherry colored lips.

"Really, what.....a transfer student....."

Pfft *pfft* She murmured something to herself.

(.....If she stays quiet, she looks just like a normal, ordinary cute girl.)

And, while staring at the side of her face, Kamito thought.

Claire suddenly raised her head, then turned to face him.

"Um, because you are here, perhaps, you are also in the Raven class?"

"Yeah. .....does that mean, you are in the same class?"

"Yeah. I'm also from the Raven class!"

Claire spoke with a seemingly cheerful voice. Somehow she seemed awfully happy.

Her smiling face would charm anyone who was unaware.

"Say, since it has turned out this way, I'll give you another chance Kamito."

"What chance?"

"Contract. Without a doubt, this time become my exclusive contracted spirit Kamito."

"Wh-Why do I have to do that?"

"Fu, It's natural! Because you snatched the spirit that should have been mine."

Puffing up with her unfortunate chest, Claire pointed her index finger in front of his eyes.

As always, she put forth an arrogant reason.

(.....An annoying girl)

Kamito is really quite irritated. Particularly, with no gratitude for saving her life, he had been called a thief.

—For such an arrogant princess, some proper punishment was needed.

"Okay. I'll bind a spirit contract with you, alright."

Helplessly, Kamito purposely nodded his head.

"........Eh? Um, so, at last you have finally become obedient."

She thought that he would be more resistant. Due to the unexpected response, Claire nodded as though quite bewildered.

"In that case—"

Slowly, Kamito raised Claire's chin by his fingertip.

"Ha? Wha-Wha-What are you doing?"

"Doing? A spirit contract, a high level humanoid spirit contract..... you understand?"

"A......."

Claire's face froze.

A high level humanoid contract.

In short, it was—

"**A contract sealed by a kiss**, isn't it?"

Kamito said it, and Claire's face blushed red.

"Uh, not, to that extent—you don't have to go that far, I mean, that."

In a panicky irritable tone, she shook her head furiously.

"Eve-Even without any such formality, I don't mind...."

"Are you scared?"

"I-I'm not particularly scared! Um, but, that....."

"Then close your eyes."

Kamito mischievously whispered to a shrinking Claire's ears.

"Eh, wait.....hiwaaaa!?"

(.....She is totally green in such things.)[4]

Such a cute reaction, of course I would want to bully her.

Slowly, bringing his face closer to her thin cherry color lips.

"Um, sorry, I apologize.....so.....forgive me"

"Too late—"

"Su, so...kyauu!"

Claire gave up then closed her eyes.

(An obedient girl.....)

Kamito smiled bitterly in his mind.

Of course, he did not seriously plan to contract by kiss.

It was a thorough revenge for being tormented by her, but he was not so devilish as to go that far to mistreat a young girl.

Time to let her off—then, as he was about to detach his body, at that moment—

"Hey, you."

He was tapped from behind on his shoulder.

Kamito slowly, timidly turned around.

In that place—

"What are you doing, here in this sacred institute Areishia Spirit Academy?"

A gentle smile floated from the beautiful woman standing there.

She seemed to be in her mid-twenties. Long black hair, and wearing a pair of green black rimmed glasses.

She was dressed in a dark grey suit with a long sleeved white robe on top of it.

"I'm the one in charge of the Raven Class, Freya Grandol. I've heard of you from the headmistress. The Academy's first ever male elementalist."

Wearing a smile that looked like it was pasted on her face, the beautiful woman introduced herself.

However, her eyes were not smiling.

"Now, why did you make our princess cry, bastard?"

Part 3

Kamito rose up onto the platform, causing some quiet murmurs within the classroom.

That a male elementalist had transferred in, the rumors seemed to have already spread around. But they don't often get the chance to meet a young boy of the same age, so they couldn't hide their anxiety and curiosity from him.

"Is that a male elementalist—"

"He has such vicious looks, like he will kill someone with them."

"Seems like he has already raped Claire Rouge."

"Wh-What is rape?"

"I-I don't know, but....so-something, perverted!"

"However, his delinquent look, is quite cool ♪."

"Don't be fooled by his outward appearance. Because every man is a perverted beast."

"Rumor has it that he was also having an affair with Ellis Fahrengart."

"Eeh, with that super-serious leader of the knights? By the way, what is an affair?"

"I don't know but..... so-something, indecent!"

.....*whisper* *whisper*.

(.....What are they talking about nonsensically?)

Looking around the classroom built like an old theater, Kamito let out a sigh.

The number of students was fourteen or fifteen. Everyone had been brought up as a princess. Almost all of them were looking towards Kamito with interest, but some of the girls seemed really scared.

(Well, It was an expected reaction from them.)

After all, whenever anyone heard about a male elementalist, the first thing that came into their mind was the name of the ancient demon king who brought disaster and chaos to the continent. .....In other words, an excessively bad image.

Inside the classroom, while being showered with sharp glances like needles, Kamito had the urge to immediately run away.

Among them the specially intense glare—came from the red haired girl in the front row.

Claire's glare that could burn people merely by her sight was fixed on Kamito.

"Burn, Burnt, Burning....."

She grumbled with different forms of the word.

Apparently, from a while ago up until now, she still seemed angry. —Obviously.

For that, Kamito reflected whether he had overdone it.

(If I don't properly apologize later...)

"Obliterate into cinders, obliterate into cinders, obliterate into cinders....."

.....don't know whether he would be forgiven when he apologizes.

"Stop chirping. Be quiet. Do you bunch want to lose credit?"

The professor in charge, Freya Grandol, hit the desk with the class list and the classroom became silent.

She was not a teacher of practical skills but a special lecturer and also a member of the spirit research agency who is traveling in every region of the Spirit Forest of the continent performing field work.

"Here, you, hurry up and introduce yourself."

The eye glasses worn by the beautiful woman gave her an intellectual appearance, but if she opened her mouth, it would expose her true colors.

Well, to put it nicely, she had a daring and largehearted disposition. At least, she didn't seem to be a bad person.

Kamito stepped forward in front of the podium, and briefly introduced himself.

"I am Kazehaya Kamito, sixteen years old. However, as you can see, I'm a male elementalist.....so, don't be afraid and let us get along with each other, thanks."

It was too simple, but he had nothing else to say.

For secrets that can't be said, there were plenty.

The classmates reaction were—

"Like, ordinary.....right?"

"Yeah, ordinary. Not much of a demon king."

(.....oh?)

"However, seems like, I have fallen for him ♪."

"A, see. An aloof look, doesn't he make you want to protect him?"

The once quiet classroom was filled with buzzing again.

(Wh-What is this fluffy sweet feeling?)

Due to the unexpected reaction of the young girls, Kamito was puzzled.

He thought that he would be greeted with chilly eyes or even despising eyes.

However, the reactions that he felt earlier from all of the girls were very light.

Guessing Kamito's doubt, Ms. Freya whispered into his ear.

"Ah, the princesses here have different senses to the commoners. After all, they are constantly handling the most puzzling neighbor to humans: 'the spirits'. Well,

rather than criticizing you as a male elementalist, they are just curious in many ways about a young boy of the same age."

(Really? Is that how it is—)

Since it was put that way, it might be a little easier.

"U-Um, Kamito.....you?"

And, one of the girls timidly raised her hand.

"Ye-Yeah, What?"

"Um, umm, wha-what's your favorite food?"

"Eh? Well, anything.....if anything, I like Gratin"

"Ordinary!" "Quite Ordinary!" "I thought he would say Nyoitaimori!" "Cute!"

Blah blah blah.

".....What's this. A Nyoitaimori?"

Starting with that girl, one by one, they poured questions towards him.

"Where is your home town?" "Your three sizes?" " Which place do you wash first in a bath?"

.....Princess, It was almost sexual harassment.

However, the one who was asking the question was blushing red all the way to her ears.

"Have you decided on your team yet?"

"Team?"

"Of course the team for this coming Blade Dance"

"Aa—"

The Blade Dance that would be held two months later was going to be in the format of a five person team group battle. Kamito, as one person, couldn't enter by himself, he needed to find other elementalists and form a team.

"As of now, I don't have a team yet. I'm going to start looking for my other fellow teammates now."

In two months, whether he would find such people, he didn't know.

"Is it true, that you have tamed the sword sealed spirit that no one else has been able to contract?"

"Wh?"

Kamito's eyebrow frowned in surprise. It looked like words of the event from this morning had already went around in the academy.

Who on earth—

"Yeah, and I am the one who tamed this Kamito that tamed the spirit!"

Slowly rising, Claire puffed up her almost nonexistent chest proudly.

"......as I thought, you!"

The princesses shrieked together in excitement.

"Kamito, what's your relationship with Claire?"

"Master and her slave spirit!"

"Total nonsense. Don't answer it for me!"

Kamito quickly retorted against Claire who was answering it with her hands on her hips.

"What, an insolent slave spirit."

"When did I become your slave spirit!"

Watching the interaction between these two people, the girls became more and more excited.

The situation was about to be out of control—

Bam. Ms. Freya struck her desk. The classroom settled down.

"Arg. Girls, cut it out! You, hurry up and choose your favorite seat."

"Ye-Yes.....!"

Freya sent a lifeboat, Kamito gladly rode on it.

Of course, he preferred to sit as far from the red haired princess as possible. He started walking towards one of the seats in the back.

At that moment. *Pashii*, a torturing leather whip coiled around his neck.

"Arg!"

With his neck being strangled, in that way, he had been pulled backward.

Cough *cough*, "What are you doing!"

"Where are you going? Your seat is next to me."

"Hah, who will sit in such a dangerous seat? Uooooh—"

While his neck was being strangled, Kamito tried to move forward.

"Hm, trying to oppose me. I'll show you who's the master!"

Scratch scratch scratch scratch.....!

Kamito tried to unfasten the whip, Claire skillfully controlled her whip and prevented him from doing so.

"dddd.....da, mn....."

He couldn't breathe. More and more oxygen ceased to circulate in his brain, at that time.

Swoosh the sound of a gust of wind, Kamito's body was suddenly released.

"Oooowahh.....!"

Kamito lost his balance and tripped over the staircase.

What on earth happened—

".....h!?"

Turning around, in front of him standing stabbed into the floor was a sharp arrow.

Not a metal arrow. It's a clear ice arrow sparkling from the reflection of the sunlight.

(.....Is this, an elemental waffe?)

The same as Claire's flame whip, the incarnation of their spirit was turned into its weapon form.

Who was it...?

"A disgrace, Claire Rouge."

An elegant voice was heard in the highest part of the classroom.

Kamito staying down on the ground, looked up and there—

An extravagant platinum blonde beautiful young girl, standing with her hands on her hips.

A high class princess, as featured in a painted picture. Her skin is as white as the first snow.

The color of her pupils is a fine emerald green in pale radiance.

A charming smile appeared, calmly looking down at Claire.

".....W-What do you want, Rinslet Laurenfrost?!"

Claire growled in a deep voice. A dangerous color floated in her ruby eyes, it seemed like she would bite at any moment.

"Give up, because he had already said that he wants to sit next to me."

Hmmp, combing her platinum blonde hair, declared the princess.

(I have not said anything of that sort—Anyway, it was a big help.)

Kamito was about to stand up when the blonde haired princess gracefully came down the stairs.

She bent down in front of Kamito, and stared at him as though evaluating his value.

As the adorably beautiful girl was intently staring at him, Kamito's eye unintentionally diverted.

"Hmm, the face is not so bad."

Rinslet seemed satisfied, nodded and-

"Hey! You, do you want to become my servant?"

"What?"

Suddenly, she said something unexpected.

"Do-Don't lay your hands on him as you please, this guy is my slave spirit!"

Claire ran up on the stairs, and immediately grasped Kamito's arm.

"When did I become yours."

"Shut up!"

Claire suddenly yanked his arm.

The upper arm touched her breast, Kamito's heart involuntarily beat faster.

Although it was almost **nonexistent**— She was still a sixteen year old young girl.

A reasonable elastic feeling was all that was needed and his heart would be pounding.

But—

Fuyoyon~

On his other arm, **an utterly other dimensional sensation could be felt**!

"Ah, he does not belong to you, does he?"

Rinslet held Kamito's left arm tightly with both hands.

Different from Claire's pitiful assets, over here there is a considerable...sense of existence.

(Wai-Wait, this is.....!)

Pressed from both sides with a soft feeling, Kamito's face suddenly became hot.

"Re-Release, you fool!"

"What did you say, flat chest!"

A crackling spark scattered from the two princesses glaring at each other.

Funyu. *Fuyon~*. Fukyun~*.

.....Though it felt great, but if they don't release his arms first, it seemed like his heart would burst.

And, at that time.

"Owawawah, m-milady, don't give more hardship to Mr. transfer student!"

From above the classroom, A young girl in maid clothes came running down.

(.....What the? A maid?)

Kamito spreads his eyes, staring at the young girl's appearance.

A waving long skirt with frills. A short bob trim cut black hair. A white brim that nicely suits her is resting on top of her head.

No matter how you look at it, she's a fine maid.

(.....Why is there a maid here in this academy!?)

Since she called her "milady", it seems she is this blonde princess' maid.

But in any case, she seemed to have a more normal personality. Without a doubt, at least she would intervene against this sour dispute. Kamito embraced a dim hope, but at that time...

"Princess.....Kyaaaaah!"

The maid fell.

In the middle of the stairs, it was an impressive fall.

"Carol!?"

Rinslet's face became pale.

(.....Damn!)

Kamito shook off the two people's arms, and jumped kicking off the floor.

"Hiaaaaaaah!"

Somehow, he caught the screaming and falling maid's flying body. He wrapped his arms around the young girl so as to prevent her head from being hurt, and they tumbled down the stairs.

The two people hugging each other while rolling down, finally stopped.

".....Hm, are you hurt—"

He opened his mouth to say that—and then Kamito's thoughts froze.

In his front. *Fuyon~*, there were large soft things.

Under the neat and tidy cloth of the maid, melons larger than that of Rinslet.

"U.....Um, ...uaah, I'm sorry!"

Fuwa~ Tears began to float in the young maid's black pupils.

Kaatsu her face blushed, and while being panicked she tried to stand up—

"He-Hey.....mo-mogugugu~!"

The nose of Kamito was pressed more and more by her breast.

(I'm in trouble.....I can't breathe...)

"Kyaaaaaaaaaaaaaaah!"

At the sight of two people intertwined with each other, the classroom's young girls raised an excited scream.

"Pe-Pervert!" "As I thought a lewd beast!" " Reincarnation of the demon king!"

"N-No, I'm.....mogugugu.....!"

Hurriedly attempting to deny, his voice was being absorbed by the well rounded breast.

Gogogogogogogogo.....!

".....?"

Suddenly, A rumbling sound could be heard from above.

.....An earthquake. Perhaps.

Somehow, it has a very, very bad sensation.

Looking up from the valley of the breasts—

There, the shape of Claire holding a blazing flame whip.

"Thi-Thi-This perverted spirit~!"

"Wait, It can't be helped no matter how you look at it...."

"Shu-Shut up, please turn into cinders!"

(Why is it that it always becomes like this.....)

While Kamito groaned hopelessly, the whip ruthlessly swung at him with no mercy.

Chapter 4: The Wolf, the Cat and the Knight

Part 1

Good grief. I have suffered quite a lot since coming here.

One hour had passed since then. Slowly rubbing the pain in his back away, Kamito walked through the courtyard of the academy.

Although he had not been turned into cinders after receiving a hit from that flame whip, maybe Claire had held back some of her power. Still, it didn't change the fact that it was quite painful.

Claire must have been getting harshly admonished by Ms. Freya in the punishment room.

Having eluded those female classmates who had enthusiastically pursued him, Kamito finally obtained a moment of peace.

Unlike other students, he had no classes for the afternoon. After all, he had entered the school just now and had not registered for the courses.

Areishia Spirit Academy operated on a credit system in which the students could freely choose their preferred courses so long as they could meet the requirements. Because of the enormous diversity of the contracted spirits of the students, a uniform curriculum wouldn't be able to fully develop the potential of each and every princess maiden.

"For the time being, I'll make some preparations for school life starting tomorrow."

Kamito finally reached his specially prepared dormitory, a hut erected on the side of the stable.

Its appearance now looked even worse than when it was seen from the window. On top of that, it had the smell of cattle.

The door opened with a squeak. Kamito timidly stepped in.

"Hmm, surprisingly, it's not too bad."

Kamito expressed his impression of the interior.

First of all, the bed was clean. Looking from the inside, the room itself was spacious. Straw bed, table, chair,

cabinet and other furniture were prepared after all. Cooking utensils were present as well. Anyhow it wouldn't be too troublesome living here.

Kamito immediately laid down on the straw bed, and although it prickled his back a bit, the smell of sun dried straws was good for a comfortable sleep.

"Oh, well, no matter how I look at it, I just need to endure it for two months."

Lying still on the bed, Kamito fixed his eyes on his left hand, covered by the black leather glove.

Two months from now, the Blade Dance would be held in Astral Zero.

Before that, he must find four more teammates in order to enter the contest.

It was not clear what Greyworth would have him do.

But there was something he had to check with his own eyes.

A name that was deeply tied to the fate of his own self.

Participating in the contest of the Blade Dance 3 years ago, the Strongest Blade Dancer.

That accompanying her was a spirit of darkness that took the form of a human girl.

Who on earth were they?

Ren Ashbell shouldn't exist in this world anymore. Besides Greyworth, only a very small number of people were aware of this.

Even though one was just an impostor who gained the title of Strongest Blade-Dancer by fraud, it couldn't be for this reason that the witch took this much trouble to summon him here. Greyworth must be holding a huge secret.

No matter what, to find out the truth, the only way was to directly cross blades with her in the Blade Dance in two months.

"But, in your current state, you won't be able to defeat her." Greyworth had said.

That is most likely true. The witch was not lying. But surely she was not telling the truth either.

In the end, it all comes down to 'the current state'.

But in merely two months, he had to regain what was lost in the past three years.

"..."

....*Guu*, suddenly his stomach growled.

Feeling exhausted, Kamito lowered his arm that was raised towards the roof.

After all, he had not had anything to eat since wandering into the Spirit Forest this morning.

However, he decided to endure his empty stomach.

The reason was that he was out of money. Although there were restaurants for the students in the academy, the price was surprisingly high. This had already passed the level of a school for high class ladies, a school for princesses indeed.

What's the point of one cup of soup being as expensive as a normal folk's salary?

"It can't be helped. Maybe I'll ask Ellis to show me around the academic town tomorrow."

One should be able to find cheaper and delicious restaurants in the academic town at the foot of the hill.

With the cooking utensils, he could also just buy the materials and cook it on his own. For the fire all he needed to do was to go to the Spirit Forest and catch some low level fire spirits.

"Bacon and mushroom pasta sounds really good..."

He got more hungry by thinking about food.

"Should I go to the Spirit Forest and collect some mushrooms now?"

As he started to seriously entertain that thought, from somewhere, the smell of delicious soup flowed in.

"....Hmm?"

Frowning, Kamito got up from the bed.

It seemed the smell was coming in from the gap of the half opened door.

Twitching his nose to inhale the smell, Kamito opened the door...

In front of him was a bowl of soup that gave off white steam.

Filled with a lot of onions and chicken with bones, the soup looked delicious.

"...Am I imagining things, or is this the kindness from heaven for my unending misfortune?"

Drawing a blank because of the hunger, Kamito reached out with his hands towards the bowl without any suspicion.

Suddenly the bowl rose up a bit.

He stretched out his hand again.

Once again the bowl was raised.

Then in front of the Kamito was the face of that princess with platinum-blonde hair.

Her name should be Rinslet Laurenfrost if he remembered correctly.

Behind her, the girl Carol in a maid's uniform stood courteously.

"What's the meaning of this?"

Kamito asked with half-closed eyes[5].

"Fuu, you must be hungry, right? Kazehaya Kamito?"

"Yeah."

Kamito nodded honestly.

"Bark, woof, and then swear that you will be my slave, and I'll let you have this bowl of soup."

Rinslet held the bowl still, and puffed up her large chest.

"I refuse. Bye Bye."

Bang.

"Ahh, wait, wait a second. Listen to what I say, you insolent person."

Bang! *Bang!* The door was kicked repeatedly.

It would be troublesome if she breaks it. Kamito opened the door again.

"What's that? Are you going to let me have the soup now?"

"Right away if you lick my foot... Ah, why are you closing the door again!"

Rinslet quickly stuck her foot into the gap of the door, like a veteran debt collector.

"Ouch! That hurts!"

That looked painful... What the hell was she here for anyway?

"Are you alright, milady?"

Worried about Rinslet, the Maid, Carol, asked.

Kamito had no choice but to open the door, Rinslet glared at him with tears in her eyes.

"How can you be so insolent after I offered my hands of kindness towards you?"

"No, you... Hands of kindness?"

It appeared that she was serious. Slowly, Kamito's head starts aching.

(Sheesh, all the princesses of this academy are so troublesome.)

Kamito complained inside his mind.

"Ah—"

After Rinslet got a glimpse of the inside of the hut, her face started to twitch.

"Ah, you, why are you living inside a stable?"

"The stable is next door. This is my dormitory. Home is where you make it."

"..."

"Stop looking at me with such pity. It makes me feel sad."

Her face looked like that she was seriously concerned about it. Kamito's attitude softened a little bit.

"Rather than living in a condition like this, you should come to my house. I'll specially hire you as a servant."

"Ah, milady, I believe he will look great if we dress him as a maid."

Carol showed her support with a big smile. (This girl is troublesome as well.)

Well, even so, it seemed as if Rinslet was genuinely worried about his circumstances.

"Your sympathy is appreciated, but I don't plan to throw away my pride." Kamito shook his head.

Displeased, Rinslet perked up her lips.

"So you don't like becoming my servant?"

"That's right. It is no use to try to placate me."

"So full of yourself, even though you wag your tail at Claire Rouge."

"When did I wag my tail at her?" Kamito grumbled with half-closed eyes. Well, many people might think the same—

Could it be that this princess was trying to get close to Kamito mainly out of her rivalry with Claire?

(Yare yare, such an unexpected annoyance.)

Kamito let out a heavy sigh.

"I got it. That's fine with me if that's how you want it." Rinslet cleared her throat, and placed the bowl on the ground.

"Hmm?"

"I'll leave the soup here. From the very beginning it was because Carol cooked too much of it and it will be a shame to waste the leftovers. You should be grateful for my benevolence."

"Eh?"

(This young lady, by any chance)—

Rinslet turned around elegantly and was about to leave.

"Ahh, Wait, Rinslet!"

Kamito suddenly called out.

Rinslet winced and stopped in her steps.

"Wh-What is that? Suddenly calling other people's first name—"

"I can't be your servant, but we can be friends."

"Eh?"

Rinslet's emerald green eyes open wide.

"Thank you for being worried and coming to see me."

"Wh-Wha, you, you insolent. Of-Of course that's not true."

Rinslet suddenly blushed and turned her face away.

"Fufu, milady is so..."

Carol covered her mouth and giggled.

Part 2

Right at that moment—

"Rinslet Laurenfrost!"

A voice, with which had become familiar to Kamito, suddenly passed into his ears.

Claire was walking towards them, her red twintails swaying.

It appeared that Ms. Freya's admonishing session was finally over.

"Don't feed my contracted spirit without permission, you thieving dog."

"You... Who are you calling a thieving dog!?"

Here we go again, Kamito let out a tired sigh.

"What's that? Isn't your family crest a dog?"

"Why you—Laurenfrost's family crest is a proud White Wolf!"

"White Wolf? Changing it into a Chihuahua fits you better."

"...!"

Provoked by Claire's words—

"Claire Rouge... You really got my dander up." Rinslet said with a suppressed voice.

In a flash, a fog-like chill hung around them. The temperature dropped dramatically.

"Wait, you can't be calling your spirit—"

Kamito hastily called out, but it was too late.

The cold wind swirled. Rinslet's hair flew up, rippling.

—Oh freezing beast with Ice-teeth, merciless hunter of the forest.

—Now is the time to abide the contract of blood, hasten to my side as commanded!

As soon as Rinslet finished chanting the summoning spirit spell, a gust of ice storm engulfed all of the surroundings.

Amid the roaring and swirling blizzard, a figure appeared.

A beautiful wolf, with a coat of silver white fur.

Its body exuded a freezing chill.

"This is..."

"It is the contract spirit of milady, the demon ice spirit Fenrir." Carol said with a smile.

The imposing aura that white wolf carried, was definitely incomparable to a low level spirit.

In regards to ranking between spirits, the white wolf was unmistakably higher than mid-level. To have made contracts with spirits of this level, this young lady was definitely not an ordinary person.

"Well, your dog is still the same, with its coat color barely meritable."

Claire shook her twintails in disdain.

"You... You called it a dog again, You flat chest! I absolutely will not forgive your insult to the family of Laurenfrost!"

Covered with the chilling air, the white wolf roared, and dashed toward Claire.

"Who are you calling flat chest!? Come, Scarlet!"

Claire lashed at the ground with her whip. A scorching hell cat immediately appeared from the twirling rising flames.

It appeared that Claire had long conjured up her spirit already.

"—Hey you two! No fighting with your spirits here!"

Kamito cried out. The horses in the stables neighed in fear.

"I will not forgive you for putting your hand on my slave. I'll end it here today, you thieving dog."

"I'll surely steal your servant and make him mine!"

Sparks burst out between the two girls.

If one listened to these lines only, it sounded like two women in love, fighting over a man.

"The two ladies look like lovers fighting over a man!"

"Carol, you don't have to say that." Kamito looked at the maid standing next to him with squinted eyes.

"By the way, is it really OK to not stop them?"

"That's right. They have always been like this."

"These two girls have always been behaving like this towards each other...?"

"Yes, the relation between the two ladies is very good."

"Is this irony?"

Kamito grumbled with a sigh.

"You have always been an eyesore, Claire Rouge!"

"You are the same, Rinslet! Why do you have to always cause me trouble!"

Demon ice spirit Fenrir—

Flame spirit Scarlet—

The two spirits suddenly jumped up in the air and clashed.

Ice and Fire collided, sending a storm bursting around.

From Kamito's point of view, the levels of the two spirits were almost the same. But it seemed that Claire had an advantage in the skill of mastering the spirits.

However, the flame spirit in her command was apparently quite spent out.

(Because she was beaten up by the sword spirit a few hours ago—)

Receiving such a large amount of damage, she couldn't possibly have recovered by taking a short break.

Kamito observed the fighting of the two spirits.

(Eh? What? .....A burning smell?)

Kamito frowned and looked around.

When the sight came into his eyes, his expression suddenly froze.

It was burning.

Kamito's hut was burning fiercely.

The straws that were stocked next to his hut had caught the sparks of the flame spirit and started burning.

"Ah, mmmmmmm-my home!"

Hearing the cries of Kamito, Claire quickly turned towards him.

"Rinslet! Pause! We got a fire!"

"It is no use to distract me... Huh? It really is burning!"

The hut on fire burned more and more violently. Sooner or later the stables would catch fire too.

"My home—"

"Calm down. A fire of this scale, I'll put it out in no time—Fenrir!"

Rinslet cried out, the ice demon white wolf instantly came back to her side.

Just as one thought that, the white wolf suddenly disappeared in the air, and in Rinslet's hands, a huge Ice Longbow appeared.

Elemental waffe—the second purified form of the spirit.

"Oh freezing ice fang, pierce your target! Freezing Arrow!"

Rinslet drew an ice arrow and shot.

The arrows turned into countless shards of ice and rained down, causing the burning flames to instantly be extinguished.

"Well, with me here it is a piece of cake!"

Rinslet stroked her long platinum blonde hair and puffed up her chest proudly.

"....."

Kamito stood motionlessly with a dumbfounded stare.

By raining-down ice arrows, **the hut was smashed into pieces**.

"Kohon", Rinslet let out a dry cough.

"...Seems like I went a bit too far."

"This is not called a bit! Don't you have any control over your power?"

"You... Shut up! From the very beginning it was you who lit it up!"

Ignoring the stunned Kamito, those two engaged in an argument again.

At that moment—

"What are you doing!"

The footsteps of several people running from the middle court could be heard.

One of them was the ponytail girl in a silver breastplate.

Ellis Fahrengart, the commander of the Sylphid Knights, whom was in charge of upholding the Academy's discipline.

Behind her there were two girls in the same attire.

Claire clicked her tongue, and Rinslet also didn't bother to hide her face of displeasure.

"It is prohibited to fight due to private matters in school... What!?"

The hastily running steps suddenly stopped.

Her eyes widened, looking dazed at the pile of rubble that was Kamito's home.

Black smoke slowly rose from the charred rubble.

"This is..... What on earth is this?!"

Ellis questioned Kamito, her voice charged with fury.

She drew the sword that hung at her waist, pointing it at Kamito's throat.

"You, you hate the house that I made! Is that it? Is this your act of protest?!"

"No... There is absolutely no such thing! This is because—"

Kamito quickly explained.

"It was this stupid dog who blew it up to dust."

"Before that, this pitiful chest lit it on fire!"

Hearing the voices from behind, Ellis turned around.

Claire and Rinslet, pointed their fingers at each other in accusation.

"... So that's how it was. It was your work, just like always."

Ellis sighed with an expression that said 'I understand'.

"Knight commander, your greeting is more enthusiastic than usual."

"It is the usual greeting, isn't it? Problematic students of the Raven class?" Ellis looked sharply at Rinslet.

Soon, the girls from the Knight brigade who were following Ellis finally caught up.

A girl with tea colored hair tied in braids, and another girl with black hair in a tomboy style.

As soon as they saw Claire and Rinslet, the two girls put on expressions like they had bitten some bitter worm .

"...Hell cat Claire! And Ice Wolf Rinslet!"

"What did they do again this time, these guys from the lowly Raven class?"

In the eyes of the girls plainly floated a contemptuous look.

"...What did you say?"

"What did you utter just now?"

Claire and Rinslet glared at the two girls at the same time.

But the girls completely ignored them, focusing their eyes on Kamito instead.

"Are you that newly transferred male elementalist?"

"Oh, not bad. Very handsome."

The girl with braids looked at Kamito up and down like she was evaluating his value.

The girl's scrutiny made Kamito shrink away in discomfort.

"Wait, this guy is my slave spirit that I caught!"

"I tamed Kazehaya Kamito: he is my servant!"

Claire and Rinslet arbitrarily declared their ownership of Kamito at the same time.

The knight girl with braids sniffed with disdain, and said: "Alas, because nobody wants to form a team with you, you use your sex appeal to seduce the transfer student. Such a fitting style for countryside nobles."

"You dare to call me a countryside noble!"

Rinslet's face suddenly turns livid.

It appeared that the girl stepped on a mine that should not have been stepped on.

"Sure I did. The Laurenfrost family has only a big-name, they are really just country bumpkins."

"You... You... You...!"

"M-Milady. Please calm down—"

"Fu-Fufu-Fu, ...Carol, I am quite calm."

Rinslet revealed a bright smile... Although she tried to be ladylike, her face was still quite scary.

Another girl knight turned to Claire, and scorned: "As for Claire Rouge, although she is a noble, isn't she the sister of a traitor? Really, why did the Academy accept this person for admission—"

At that instant, Claire suddenly lashed at the ground with the whip.

"—Shut up. Or I'll turn you into charcoal cinders."

Claire snarled with a suppressed voice, her voice trembling, her red eyes quietly burning with anger.

(...Claire is the sister of a traitor?)

Kamito frowned.

(...What on earth is the meaning of this?)

The two girls felt the sudden change of atmosphere and fell silent.

"You went too far." Ellis chided the two, then turned to Claire.

She cleared her throat and said: "In short, I will report this instance to the knight headquarters. The charge will be using spirits to start a small fire and causing property damage. We'll give you notice for the specifics of the punishment at a later time. Please refrain from doing such stupid things again. We are busy, you know?"

"Let's go." Ellis said and was about to lead the other two away.

However, from behind came a voice.

"Hold on! Ellis Fahrengart, are you trying to run away ?"

"What?"

Ellis stopped, and turned back to Claire who called out to her.

"What did you say just now?"

The calm tone of voice was full of anger. Ellis's hand was on the hilt of the sword at her waist.

"Oh, you heard it? I did not expect the Sylphid Knights to be cowards."

"Claire Rouge, do you think I'll just let it go if someone insults the Sylphid Knights?"

Ellis unsheathed her sword. The other two drew their swords at the same time.

"I'll return that line intact right back at you. You may insult me as you please, but I will not forgive anyone who insults my sister."

Claire struck the ground with her whip.

"I request a duel, Ellis Fahrengart, with the other two as well."

"Let me join as well, Claire Rouge. It is the Laurenfrost family's injunction to take revenge at those who dare to smear the Laurenfrost family name."

Rinslet ruffled her hair, and showed an undaunted smile.

At this point, Ellis pointed the tip of her sword towards these two.

"Well, it will stain the name of the Sylphid Knights if we are accused of running away. I accept the request. I can't stand the mess of your Raven class any longer."

"Hey, isn't it prohibited to fight for private matters?"

At such a precarious intense moment, Kamito instinctively spoke out.

"It is forbidden to fight for private matters within school grounds. Anyway, I have no intention of doing it here."

"What do you mean?"

Ignoring Kamito who was tilting his head, Ellis turned to Claire.

"The time will be 2am tonight, in front of the Gate. I'll leave it to you to decide the format."

"...One-on-one is too much trouble. How about a three-man match."

"That will do."

Ellis nodded and put away the sword, then turned around and left.

Claire glared at the back of the knights and cursed viciously:

"Well, I will let you regret this, especially that short haired girl. I'll definitely kick her ass!"

"Such a good opportunity. I have disliked the bunch from the Knights since long ago."

"Rinslet, try not to be a burden."

"Huh? Who are you saying that to?"

"...Why you two. After destroying the hut, now you are having a duel. Please take mercy on me."

Kamito sighed deeply. Then suddenly he realized.

(Battle as a team of three. So, who will be the third person?)

"As it turns out—"

Claire placed one hand on her waist, and pointed a finger at Kamito.

"It is time to show us your strength, slave spirit!"

"Ahhh... I knew this is how it would be..."

In front of rubble heap that was his former home, Kamito slumped his shoulders in dejection.

Chapter 5: Claire's Feelings

Part 1

(...Sigh, I have totally gotten myself into something troublesome.)

While walking on the stone pavement of the academy, Kamito sighed quite the number of times today. In front of his eyes was the culprit with her red twintailed hair swaying about.

As before he had an empty stomach, he had lost his house and to make matters worse that was the outcome from a duel by fellow elementalists.

...No matter what the circumstances, this is beyond misfortune. It has to be none other than the Dusk Witch's curse.

"Unh, are you grumbling? How unmanly!"

Claire turned around and snapped her fingers.

"My house."

"U..."

Kamito groaned with his eyes half-opened. Claire averted her eyes to look far away.

"Pyromaniac. Criminal."

"...I... I get it! I also feel a little bad!"

She blushed and pouted her lips. It seemed she was at least aware of her crime.

As it was the right moment, Kamito blatantly sighed.

"Oh boy, the homeless me will have to sleep out in the Spirit Forest."

"....."

"Sleeping at night in the Spirit Forest is seriously a suicidal act. But it can't be helped, after all, my house has been completely burnt down."

Kamito dropped his shoulders unnaturally for Claire to see.

Claire gnawed her lips. And then, she tip-toed—

And stared into Kamito's eyes, motionlessly.

Her face was near. Kamito was involuntarily startled as his nostrils were lightly tickled by the scent of a girl.

"...Okay then. I...I'll compensate you, properly!"

"Compensate?"

Kamito's face somehow twitched with a bad premonition.

Part 2

— Kamito was brought to the front of the female dormitory of the Raven class.

Although it was called a dormitory, it was not a normal building. It was an elegant mansion akin to the residences of upper aristocrats.

"...Eh, what's this?"

"For a while, I'll allow you to freeload in my room. Please be grateful."

"Huh?"

...What did she suddenly propose, this high-class lady.

"After all, if I left you outside, Rinslet would come meddling. And because you are my slave spirit, it is natural for me, the elementalist, to take care of you."

Claire informed him, bending her empty chest.

"No, that's not it... you are still a girl of age and I may do something, did you not consider that?"

"D...Do you plan to do something to me?"

Claire glared. Kamito shook his head horizontally.

"Scarlet will stand watch. If you try to do something... cinders."

"Isn't it a violation of the dormitory rules? A guy like me, entering the female dormitory."

"It's alright, because you will be treated as my contracted spirit. The same as Scarlet."

"That is completely not alright."

Kamito retorted with his half-opened eyes, Claire was fidgeting with her hair irritatedly and thrust her finger.

"Ahh, come on, do you want to stay? Or do you want to turn into cinders? Which?"

"... Why are there only those two choices?"

Kamito dropped his shoulders and sighed in resignation.

Claire's room was on the second floor of the aristocrat residence-like female dormitory.

"Don't make too much noise, because the dormitory secretary is super scary."

"Y...Yes...pardon my intrusion."

For Claire, who is ideally pictured as arrogant, to be afraid of the dormitory secretary, his interest got piqued a little.

While thinking of that, he timidly stepped into the room.

No matter how rough her personality was, Claire was a girl.

In addition, she was an outstandingly, pitifully beautiful girl; even Kamito could not help but admit that.

As expected, when he entered the room, he grew tense .

"—Flame, illuminate."

Claire recited the spirit magic and the room was lit up.

Claire's room was—

"....."

In senseless disorder.

There was a collapsed mountain of a large number of books. Clothes were left crumpled, plush toys and small items and so on, were scattered here and there till there was no place left to stand.

It did not look like a room of a pedigree high-class lady.

"...You should at least do some cleaning."

"U...Usually, Scarlet does the cleaning. Come on, quickly get in."

Claire kicked Kamito's back, sending him to the middle of the room.

"Ouch...good grief, you actually use such a powerful fire spirit to clean the room, if the elementalists across the world hear about it, they'll all cry you know."

"Hmm, Scarlet is different from you, she is clever you know. She also burns the trash."

"Ahh, I see. It is good as long as it's convenient."

As soon as they were arguing, a hell cat, cladded in flames, manifested and started to put the room's trash together and tidy up. ... Indeed, there seemed to be a place where the wastepaper was incinerated.

"...Are you fine with just that?"

If that fire spirit of Claire grew, it could match up with even a large dragon type.

...What a sorrowful sight? Was it being made to do things like cleaning the room?

"Thank you, Scarlet. Good girl."

Suri suri.[6] *Nade nade*.[7]

Meow. Meow.

"Are you a cat!?"

Kamito retorted, without thinking, to the fire spirit fawning happily.

(...That proud spirit has been completely tamed...)

Well, if one was gently stroked like that by Claire, whose outward appearance at least was that of a beautiful girl, it was understandable to be completely attached.

For now, since there was no place to stand, Kamito too helped with the cleaning.

A long time ago, because of Greyworth working him hard, housework became his forte.

He started carrying the books that were in a huge pile at his feet to put aside at a corner of the room.

Then, he caught sight of the titles written on the books' front cover.

'The Count And The Naughty Princess', 'Tease Me More, Master!', 'The Princess Abducted By Pirates'... Indeed these are what teenage girls like. There were ten-odd such romance novels, which were intended for teenagers.

"Hmm, so you like this kind of stuff. That was a little unexpected."

"...D... Don't look!"

Bofun.

The pillow, Claire threw, landed a direct hit on Kamito's face, and he toppled over and was squashed by the books.

"If you don't want anyone to look, you should have tidied up. I feel that it's no big deal to like such novels."

"S...Shut up, it...it's not like I like them! ... Err, yea, I borrowed them from a friend, so I have no choice but to read them!"

"Hmm, I see. You borrowed fourteen volumes worth of novels that you do not like."

"S...Shut up!!"

Poka poka poka.[8]

Claire got partially teary and hit Kamito. It was weak, possibly due to her being embarrassed.

Kamito shrugged his shoulders and placed his hand on the floor to stand up.

And, just then, that hand came in contact with—

(...Hn?)

A cloth that was somewhat nice to touch.

Was it silk? It was soft, silky and very nice to touch.

Unintentionally, he grabbed it. At its edges, white flutters were attached to it.

(—..., white flutters!?)

With his face twitching, he stared at his hand.

Kamito's hand tightly grasped an undergarment attached with fine laces.

...Surprisingly, it was a rather mature silk panty.

Cold sweat broke out on his forehead.

"Hn, what are you doing?"

"Owaa!?"

Kamito got flustered and stuffed it into his pocket.

—..., what was he going to do stuffing it in!

(What am I doing! Doesn't this make me a real pervert ?!)

"What? Why are you so shocked?"

Claire frowned and drew her face near with suspicion.

"N...No, it's nothing!"

Kamito stood up while shaking his head. Was there a topic he could distract her with? He looked around... then he realized.

"...By...By the way, about this room, don't you have a roommate?"

Even if this was a dormitory of the academy attended by princesses, the room was a little too big for one person to be living in it.

With the room so messed up, wouldn't the roommate girl get angry?

Speaking of which, was it good to take in a guy without even getting permission from her roommate?

Thereupon, Claire tightly bit her lips and looked downwards.

"I don't. Nobody wants to be in the same room as someone like me."

"...? Don't tell me, you do not have a single elementalist partner?"

"W...Who needs things like partners. As long as I have a strong spirit, I, alone, am more than enough."

Claire folded her hands and declared so; she looked like she was pretending to be tough with all her might.

(...Why is it so?)

This person sure had a hard personality but, as an elementalist, her ability was top class.

He thought with such ability, she could ignore any team, however.

"But without gathering 5 people, you can't enter into the Blade Dance."

"...I... I'll manage it somehow. If I have to, I'll somehow gather up just that number of people."

Claire averted her line of sight awkwardly.

It seemed like she did not want to touch on this topic.

"Ig...Ignoring that, you are hungry, right?"

Claire cleared her throat forcefully.

"Hn, Ah... your long-awaited soup, which you blissfully received, was wrecked."

It was a certain somebody's fault, Kamito glared scornfully at Claire.

"Hmm, it can't be helped. Today, I'll specially feed—treat you."

"Did you say feed? Did you say that?"

"It was your imagination. Come on, bring out that table."

While sighing, Kamito took out the table.

Claire started lining up a large amount of canned food, taken from the shelves.

Canned tuna. Yakitori. Salted cod. Vegetables boiled in soy sauce. Beef stew....etc.

Kamito was dumbfounded and looked down on the pyramid of cans. Canned foods were preserved foods that soldiers carry with them on a long campaign. It was at least not dinner for a high-class young lady attending the academy.

"...W...Why is it nothing but canned food? It is definitely bad for the body, you know."

"What a foolish question, it's because I like canned food."

"No, no matter how much you like it, having just canned food is just—"

"What, it's no problem, after all I like them. If you have any complaints, then I won't give them to you."

Claire embraced the mountain of canned food with a sullen face. That face of hers was subtly red.

With that, he got it.

...Aha. That's right.

"You can't cook, right?"

After directly pointing it out, Claire stiffened her back.

"Th...Th...Th...That's not it!"

"That reaction revealed it all. Even if the mouth lies, the body is honest."

"D...Don't speak so lewdly, idiot!"

"To misinterpret a very normal speech, I think that you're the lewd one. You read too much of those novels. Claire is a lewd young lady."

"U..uuuu!"

Tears flowed out faintly from her red eyes, Claire bit down on her molars.

...He's done it. He had teased her a little too much.

(...What should I say, I unintentionally ridiculed her.)

The result of going overboard was frightening. Kamito honestly apologized.

"S...Sorry... It was my bad. I said a little bit too much."

"....!"

Claire was groaning. Like a wild animal of the feline family.

"S..Such a glare... how about, to make it up to you, I'll make dinner?"

With that, Claire, with her bristled hair, opened her eyes.

"You can cook?"

"Well, it's pretty much my forte. Do you have seasonings?"

"Such things are at the shared space at the front of the dormitory."

"Okay, if I arranged things a little, even these canned foods will become something like a cuisine. As for the fire—"

"Scarlet."

Claire snapped her fingers and Scarlet breathed out a small fire ball.

The fire ball drifted lightly in the air and stayed still on top of Kamito's hand.

"...This is convenient."

"I know!"

—And with that, after a few minutes.

In the room, the sound of something being fried resounded.

Spinach, bacon and sliced garlic were fried with butter.

Next to the frying pan, there was pasta just enough for two, boiling in a pot.

"If I recall right, she said she likes it al dente."

He chewed one piece of pasta to check.

"Hn, this is just right. Claire, where are the cutlery—"

He put down the frying pan and turned around... There was no one in the room.

"...Eh? Where is she?"

He looked around the room restlessly.

The hell cat, lying down near his feet, purred and reached out its forelimb.

Once the fire was extinguished, he looked at the front of its forelimb—

From the other side of the door in the room, a faint water sound could be heard.

"Oh, she's showering."

The shower installed in the room was a type of spirit device, which used the power of the water spirit.

To be clean in both mind and body at any time was—the ironclad rule of elementalists.

Kamito, feeling relieved, ignited the fire once again—

(... Shower!?)

He turned around again.

(W...Why... is she so thoughtlessly defenseless at such a vital moment!)

"..."

Kamito swallowed his saliva.

Saaaaaaa—

Once he was aware of it, the sound of running water, which resounded in the room, sounded strangely bewitching.

Even if she has a child-like chest, she is still a sixteen year old girl.

Furthermore, her face, without flattery, was cute. Extremely cute.

Her chest was quite a shame but... nevertheless, it was there.

Suddenly, the memory of meeting her in the forest this morning revived.

Her beautifully nude body, with red hair clinging to it.

That properly elastic sensation his hand touched.

(Waaa, don't recall it, me!)

He shook his head, shaking off his worldly desires.

At that moment.

"Kyaaa!"

He heard a shriek from the bathroom.

Kamito was taken aback and came to his senses.

(... A scream?)

Perhaps she lost control of the water spirit, causing cold water to come out.

(No, an elementalist of her level should not fail in controlling the spirit device—)

"Noooooooooo!"

Bam! The bathroom door suddenly opened and Claire dashed out.

"Wha..!?"

Her dripping wet hair disheveled—

She ran nude towards him in a straight line.

"... Hey, what's with your appearance—"

Then, Kamito's hair froze.

She was—not nude.

She was nude, but she was not exactly nude.

Transparent jelly-like water was twining itself slimily around her smooth, bare body!

"What's wrong!? What the heck is—"

"...K...Ka...Kamito, he...lp me...!"

「……や、見ない……で、
ばか、あ、あんっ！」

ビクッ、ビクンッ！

赤く火照ったクレアの裸身が、
痙攣するように跳ねあがった。

In front of his eyes was Claire, who collapsed on the floor and was gasping in agony.

"...No, don't look... idiot....Aaaa!"

Biku, bikun!

Claire turned red and her nude body was jumping about like it was convulsing.

(...Sorry. It is impossible to not get excited!)

Kamito got flustered and averted his line of sight. On the other hand, hearing the heavy breathing, stimulated his imagination.

"Ah... Hyaa... don't...do... that..."

It seemed that the water spirit of the spirit device went wild. Claire was frantically trying to control it, but there was no way she could do it in that condition.

"Hold on, I'll help you right now!"

Kamito closed his eyes and concentrated.

"Unruly spirit of water, comply with my command and settle down!"

While he softly murmured the spirit words of Chinju, his right hand was charged with divine power—

"Claire, grab my hand!"

"No, ahh...h!"

While Claire lets out a hot long breath, she somehow reached out her hand.

The moment the tip of their fingers touched.

Paan!

The water spirit, which was running wild, had its form dissolved and immediately returned into water.

Claire stayed collapsed on the flooded floor and with her face flushed; she was breathing roughly.

Her untied red hair clinging onto her skin was strangely erotic.

Kamito turned away in a fluster.

"What's wrong? With an elementalist of your level, how did such—"

"U... Erm, when I was using the shower, the water spirit suddenly went crazy... such a thing has never happened before."

While Claire moaned, she slowly got up.

"Fo...For the time being, why don't you wipe your body. You will catch a cold after all."

Kamito, with his face turned away, took out and handed over a handkerchief from his pocket.

"Th...Thank you..."

Claire nodded and accepted it—

....

"Hey, Kamito"

"Hn. What is it?"

"What is the meaning of this?"

Claire's voice trembled.

Moreover, somehow the room's temperature had rapidly risen.

"Ah"

Kamito finally realized it.

....That was right. What was in his uniform's pocket was not a handkerchief.

That was something he hid in a fluster a while ago.

That silky panty.

Gogogogogogogogogogogogo....!

In Claire's hand, an earnest flaming ball of spirit magic was born.

"Wa...Wait, calm down. You're mistaken, this is a mistake, if I explain, you'll—"

"Shut up! T...Turn into cinders, you pervert—!"

Part 3

"Kamito, get me another serving!"

"...You sure can eat. You'll get fat, you know."

It was minutes after that event. The table was lined up with numerous plates of Kamito's home cooking.

There was tuna potato salad to go with the spinach-and-bacon pasta. Pumpkin potage with gratin from the canned salmon, and for dessert, there was fruit yogurt.

They were made using the canned food, of which a great amount was found on the shelf as ingredients; however, Claire seemed full of praise. The act of her gleaming her eyes and stuffing her cheeks with pasta was somewhat awfully cute.

The fire spirit, in the form of a hell cat, was also devouring the canned tuna beside Claire.

Spirits can maintain their own existence, so they do not need material sustenance. However, among the high ranking spirits, there were also some rare ones that like human food. Although, it was only as a luxury.

"No problem, I have a constitution that doesn't get fat."

Claire placed pasta on the plate and said that with a nonchalant face. Certainly, using spirits consumed physical strength, so it was true that there were a lot of ladies with a slender figure.

"Hey, don't eat the dessert early. Despite being a high-class lady, you have bad manners."

"Unh, shut up! That's up to me, right, you panty thief!"

"Guu....."

Kamito groaned. Once she said that, he could not say anything back.

"You are demoted from slave spirit to panty thief spirit ."

"... What kind of spirit is that?"

Somehow, another new variety of spirit was born.

"You really are the worst. O...Of all things, you stole my number one favorite panty!"

"I have been saying it wasn't on purpose!"

"What? Are you being defiant?"

Claire glared.

"...No, sorry."

Kamito bowed his head in embarrassment. Well, no matter how much he thought about it, it was his own fault this time.

While Claire put the tuna potato salad into her mouth, she caught a glance of him.

"Well, I'll recognize your cooking skills at least. This is very delicious. If you make meals for me every day, I'll promote you to cooking spirit."

"I'm grateful for that. By the way, those are almost like words of proposing."

Upon pointing that out. Claire's face turned bright red.

"D...Don't be an idiot! Do you want to be turned into cinders? Come on, do you want to be turned into cinders ?

"I..I get it, so stop pointing the fork at me."

"Hmm... n...next time you say such idiotic things, I'll really burn you!"

Claire pouted her lips and turned away.

Kamito sighed in relief while he cut and divided the salmon gratin.

"...If only there was some soy sauce, this would be much better, but..."

"What's that? Food?"

"It's a seasoning circulated in my hometown. Well, you can't get it here though."

Kamito shrugged his shoulders and said that—

"Hometown, huh...."

Claire murmured with her eyelashes slightly lowered.

Somehow—she had an awfully lonely expression.

After that, for a short while, there was only the sound of cutlery being used.

After eating that satisfying dinner, Claire's mood also got a little better.

Somehow, there was a calm atmosphere.

Kamito suddenly raised his head and looked at Claire.

—He felt that it could be asked now.

He had wanted to ask her, since meeting her this morning in the forest, but did not have a chance to.

"By the way, you—"

"What?"

Claire placed down her cup of black tea.

"Why do you want such a powerful spirit?"

It was a simple question.

Despite using a spirit such as Scarlet, she still risked harming her body to reach out to a sealed spirit. He wanted to know the reason for that.

"..."

Claire—

Cast her slightly perplexed eyes down and murmured.

"There's someone I want to meet no matter what."

"Someone you want to meet...?"

Kamito dropped his sight to his left hand, concealed in his black leather glove.

What he lost three years ago, an irreplaceable, important bond which was there—

(So, she's the same as me...)

The scar engraved at the back of his hand ached.

Claire sighed and inserted her hand into the neckband of her uniform.

"...Yeah, I'll say it. Something that I can't help but hide."

What she took out from her chest was a small pendant with silver chains.

At the very center, a shiny crimson red spirit crystal was inserted in it.

Kamito saw a crest engraved there—and raised his voice in surprise.

"A flame lion... the crest of Elstein duke family!?"

Claire silently nodded.

The Elstein duke family. The grand nobles who had served the royal family for generations ever since the founding of the Ordesia Empire.

It was the noblest of the nobles, turning out one of the five princess maidens, who stood at the top among all elementalists, — Queen, who served directly under the five great Elemental Lords.

No—that should have been so.

—Till four years ago, when that incident occurred.

Rubia Elstein.

The one who brought a great unprecedented calamity to the Ordesia Empire—The Calamity Queen.

She too, same as the girl in front of him, had burning-like crimson red hair.

"Don't tell me, you're..."

"Yes, I am the Calamity Queen—Rubia Elstein's—little sister."

Claire looked straight into Kamito's eyes and nodded.

"..."

Claire Rouge. He had thought that it was an alias.

But, by no means—

(... I see. What she cast away was the Elstein family name.)

In this large continent, there was no one who did not know about that incident.

Four years ago, the Queen, serving under the fire Elemental Lord—Rubia Elstein, suddenly snatched the strongest flame spirit, Laevateinn from the shrine and disappeared.

After learning of the Queen's treachery, the outraged flame Elemental Lord got fired up and went into a frenzy .

It burned everything related to Elstein duke's territory, including the Ordesia Empire's land, the empire took enormous damage. And that did not put the Elemental Lord's anger to peace, about a year after that, no matter what method was used, not a single fire could be lit within the Ordesia Empire.

Nobody knew why the fire Queen disappeared.

The Ordesia citizens furiously cursed her and, filled with hatred, called her-

—The Calamity Queen.

"I want to meet my elder sister. When I meet her, I want to hear the truth."

For that, she had to get strong.

She had to obtain the strongest spirit.

With the reward given to the winner of the Blade Dance—

For the sake of obtaining the right of granting just one desired Wish.

Claire's expression was filled with a tragic determination.

"Besides—"

Claire slightly looked down and muttered.

"This round's blade dance has that Ren Ashbell participating."

"...!? Kehoo, kehoo—"

Once that name came out from Claire's mouth, Kamito reflexively coughed.

"...? What's wrong?"

"Aaah, that's bad..."

Ren Ashbell was the winner of the last Blade Dance.

She suddenly appeared three years ago, the strongest blade dancer.

That blade dance was splendidly vivid. At the finals, even with Numbers candidates of elementalists, she overwhelmed them.

Due to her dedicated blade dance, the flame Elemental Lord's rage was finally appeased.

"Three years ago, I saw her blade dance at the assembly hall. I also feel that I want to be like that, a noble, strong elementalist."

Claire blushed and looked down a little embarrassed.

"Ever since that day, I've always admired her...."

"...I see."

Kamito looked at Claire with a complicated expression—calmly grasping his fist tightly.

...After that, it was a strangely quiet time.

They tried to talk about anything a number of times, but all of it did not last long.

Claire yawned cutely after eating up the dishes on the table. After filling her stomach, she seemed drowsy. Well

, she did use a spirit of Scarlet's level twice in one day, so it was natural.

"Wake me up when it's time. If you do something funny, cinders."

"...Wait. Does that mean I have to stay awake for the whole time?"

Kamito complained, and in front of him, Claire was making sleeping breaths.

She had an astonishing ease at falling asleep.

"...Good grief, you'll catch a cold!"

Kamito carried Claire's petite body up like a princess.

He carried her to the bed in the corner of the room.

Scarlet walked and jumped onto the bed.

(...Even so, this girl's sleeping face is truly angel-like.)

While looking at the face, making the gentle sleeping noise, Kamito smiled bitterly.

When he put Claire to the bed, her cherry lips faintly moved.

"Elder Sister....Father...Mother..."

(Sleep-talking... huh?)

He seemed to have somewhat heard something he should not.

Certainly, after the incident of the Calamity Queen disappearing, Elstein duke family's territory should have been seized and the duke and his wife imprisoned in the Balsas prison—

"...Hn, Kamito."

"...!?"

He was shocked when his name was called suddenly.

"Ahh, what are you doing, pervert...idiot."

"...What kind of dream is she having!?"

Kamito muttered while sighing, as he stared at his hand.

After that day three years ago, he hid his left hand with a leather glove.

(You and I are the same, Claire.)

(These three years, I have stayed alive to get back my important person.)

Due to his error, he had lost her, his former contracted spirit—

Part 4

At the same instant, in every room of the female dormitory Claire lived in, a little incident occurred.

The spirits used in the spirit devices in the kitchen, bathroom and etc. suddenly began to go out of control.

After the spirit investigation party investigated the dormitory, it brought it to an end with meager words that the incident was of an unknown cause—

In the darkness illuminated by the blue moon—a black-winged angel gently alighted at the academy tower .

It was a black haired girl, dressed in a jet black dress.

The girl landed gently on the roof of the female dormitory and smiled pitifully.

"—I wanted to meet you, Kamito."

On the girl's palm, wriggling lumps of darkness were floating.

"But you're still not the true you."

She reached her hands to the empty sky and the darkness colored orbs drifted and disappeared in the night sky.

"That's why, I'll offer up my memories."

The girl chuckled.

Like a cruel little girl.

Like a pure demon.

Chapter 6: The Blade Dance at Midnight

Part 1

—It was 2 am. The time when the academy students slept and forest spirits began stirring.

On the stone paved path illuminated by the moonlight, Kamito was walking alongside Claire.

"The academy at night has an atmosphere that is very different, "

"Of course, night is the time for spirits."

Claire kept facing front and bluntly replied. Solid sounds of walking resounded loudly.

Since some time ago, Claire had not said much. She might be tense about the duel with the Knights.

"Where are you planning to do it?"

Private battles should be prohibited within the academy according to academy regulations. Is there a place for a duel outside?

"Over there—"

Claire abruptly stopped.

In front of what she was pointing, there was a gigantic stone circle.

Its ground was dimly shining in bluish-white.

"That's the—Astral Gate!"

"Yea, the gate that connects this world with the Astral Zero. The reason why the academy was built in such a remote place."

"...I see."

He was surprised that there was a Gate within the academy premises. That stone circle was perhaps a prehistoric ruin, which was used with an unknown art. It probably had a function to stabilize the unstable Gate.

"Isn't it dangerous? There are spirits that cannot be controlled by humans roaming about in the Astral Zero."

"You see, that Gate connects to a safe area where there are only low-level spirits. If not, the academy wouldn't leave it alone, right?"

Claire murmured **stupid**, and stepped into the middle of the stone circle.

She recited the words of opening the gate in the spirit language and the blue light on the ground further increased its brightness.

"Come on, you, faster! Get on too."

Led by Claire, Kamito hurriedly jumped on top of the formation of lights.

At that moment, his field of vision was filled with a white flash.

He had a feeling that his whole body was attacked with dizziness. And then—

...

—After opening his eyes, a scenery of another world spread out.

There was a deep dark forest with twisted trees standing tall.

Shining brilliantly in the night sky was a blood-like red moon.

There was a pale purple smoke-like fog shrouding nearby.

Astral Zero—another world, which spirits live in.

"If it's here, nobody can disturb us. Even if we were injured, it would not be serious, so this place is often used by the academy students for duels."

A situation in which such a thing occurred, the physical body of humans possessing divine powers would be treated the same as spirits, this meant that there's almost no physical damage received.

Naturally, this was not absolutely safe. Pain was felt normally; in exchange of the physical body not receiving damage, the mind would suffer an equal damage.

To fall into a lethargic state was still a good thing, but in the case of receiving a serious injury, one would receive severe memory impairment and the destruction

of the mind, there was also the possibility of not regaining consciousness.

"—Flame, illuminate."

Claire recited the spirit magic and a small fire ball was born on her palm, dimly lighting up a narrow open path in the middle of the forest.

"Let's go, Kamito."

Claire gently brushed her twintails and calmly walked.

"Do we have a chance of winning?"

"That depends on your ability. ...Honestly, it might be a little hard."

"Is that so?"

Kamito was surprised. For an elementalist of Claire's level, it was unexpected of her to say such a thing.

"Putting aside the other two, Ellis is strong. She isn't the Knights leader just for show. Besides, Scarlet

exhausted some strength from this morning's fight with the sealed spirit. Rinslet's ability is—well, at least I recognize it, but her teamwork is the worst."

"...That was a surprisingly calm battle strength analysis . I thought you were the more impulsive type."

"You, what do you see me as?"

"A dangerous fellow, who instantly swings a whip—Ouch!"

Pashii— A whip was promptly swung down onto Kamito's back.

...After walking a while, there was a historic ruin of a gigantic theater in the forest.

It was something from when Astral Zero and the human world were one—a long gone mythical era.

The crumbling looking stone gate greeted the two. It seemed that here was the stage for the duel.

"First of all, you, the sword elementalist, are the attacker. Rinslet and I will provide cover."

"I've got the most dangerous role! Isn't it your duel?"

"What! Do you have a complaint? Alright, if that's the case, I'll let you choose a position. Attacker or cinders, which do you like?"

"I get it. I'll be the attacker."

"A wise decision."

Claire nodded seemingly satisfied.

"By the way, you can properly handle that contracted sword spirit, right?"

"Hn, ahh...probably."

"...Probably? What do you mean?"

Claire's eyes lifted up with danger. Kamito backed off in a panic.

"Well, you see, isn't it bad if it was summoned poorly and went out of control? That's why, I have not summoned it even once since I contracted it this morning ."

That was somewhat of an explanation—he thought. Actually, it was half of the explanation.

The truth was that, by contracting with another spirit, he felt guilty in regards to her.

He felt a sense of betrayal about using a new contracted spirit.

"You succeeded in contracting in just one try, therefore there should be little chance of losing control but—well, it is a sealed spirit with a history and it certainly won't be funny if anything happened."

However, Claire seemed to have agreed for once.

"For the time being, try releasing your elemental waffe. You are able to do that, right?"

"A...aahh... Yeah."

The releasing of an elemental waffe was not something anyone could do but—

(Can't seem to get into the mood, it can't be helped—)

Kamito closed his eyes and concentrated his consciousness to the spirit seal engraved on his right hand.

"Dispassionate Queen of Steel, the sacred sword that destroys evil—"

He recited the summoning in the spirit language and the crest of two swords crossing faintly shined.

The path with a contracted spirit would be normally connected—however,

(What?)

...It was strange. He could not feel the presence of such a powerful sealed spirit.

No—he could pick up its presence, but it was as if something wasn't right, like gears not fitting together.

"—Now form a sword of steel and be the power in my hand!"

At that moment, small particles of light gathered at Kamito's palm.

And then, what appeared was—

"..."

One short sword.

To be more precise, it was a small sword almost like a knife.

...*Shin*. An awkward silence arrived.

"...Is that the sword spirit's elemental waffe?"

Claire said with her face twitching.

For an incarnation of the powerful sealed spirit that cut down Scarlet in one blow—

...Honestly, it was too shabby.

"D...Don't judge it by its appearance, it might actually have an amazing ability."

"Y...eah, that certainly may be true!"

Claire nodded for a moment while having a stiff expression.

Kamito tried cutting a buckwheat tree as a test.

Bekii. The short sword very easily broke and vanished.

"..."

"...Ahh, how should I say it, it's probably that."

Kamito bore the frozen Claire's gaze and calmly opened his mouth.

"To tell you the truth, this is the first time I've used a contracted spirit in three years. I have yet to regain that feeling."

"...Huh?"

Claire blankly opened her mouth to that shocking confession.

"You're lying... after all, didn't you easily tame that sealed spirit!?"

"That time was because I was frantically trying to save you. To be honest, I don't really understand myself how I succeeded in contracting it."

No matter how powerful a spirit one contracted with, there was no point if one could not fully draw out that power. When an inexperienced elementalist contracted a spirit beyond his means, it was often the case that its power would be too much to handle.

(...However, for my case, it's a little different.)

Kamito stared at his left hand, inserted in a leather glove.

(Probably, within my sub-consciousness, I thought about her.)

—Therefore, he could not connect the path with the new spirit.

"Wh..Wha..What's with that..."

He heard a dead groan. After lifting her head, Claire was tightly grasping a leather whip, used for training animals, with her shoulders trembling.

"No, I mean, um, my battle strength is lacking..."

"What do you mean! I am counting on your battle strength!"

Pishii! *Pishii!* *Pishii!*

"Ouch! Wait..stop!"

A tempest of unforgiving whips descended onto the escaping Kamito.

Then, there—

"What in the world are you doing? Claire Rouge."

From the other side of the dark tree grove, that voice was heard.

Claire stopped her whipping and sullenly turned around.

The ones who appeared were Rinslet and the maid Carol.

"You're late, Rinslet."

"Aah, a lady getting dressed takes time."

Rinslet proudly brushed her extravagant platinum blonde hair.

"...? What, is Carol here too?"

"Of course, as milady's supporter."

After Kamito heard that, Carol brought out a flag, seemingly from nowhere and began swinging it.

"By the way, why were you whipping Kazehaya Kamito?"

Rinslet placed her index finger at her chin and frowned dubiously.

That was—before Claire answered, Carol interrupted.

"Milady, that's something unrefined to listen to."

"What do you mean?"

"That was a form of a slightly unusual love. In a unique way, that was a perverted play."

"Ehh! Is that right, you two!?"

"T...Th..T..That's not it! W...What are you saying, you stupid maid!"

Claire's face became bright red as she denied it.

...Indifferently, he wanted the fuse-blowing whipping to stop, as it hurt.

(...Why am I already worn out before the duel.)

Kamito began to seriously think about the absurdity of his life. At that moment.

"—Your side seems to be all present, Raven class."

A frigid voice descended from right above.

"...!?"

The four of them looked upwards together.

There, above the crumbling theater wall was—

A figure of a gallant female knight with her blue hair fluttering in the gentle breeze.

Beside her, two knights, also wearing the same silver armor, were standing.

He heard their names from Claire. The one with the short hair was Rakka. The one with the braiding was Reishia.

"—Ellis Fahrengart, for how long were you here!"

"By the way, you wouldn't by any chance be waiting for a chance to appear at a cool moment, right?"

"Wha... T...There's no such thing! I just only got here!"

After Kamito pointed it out with his half-opened eyes, Ellis was frankly disturbed and ended up almost falling.

...Somehow, that was a rather deplorable look for a Knights' leader.

Ellis sharply glared at Kamito and the rest, and drew her sword from her waist.

"Let's go, Raven class. Let's finish this duel by day break—"

At that moment. The illumination of a large flame lit the stage of the theater.

The one shined on by that illumination—

"That's—!?"

A large eagle was spreading its enormous wings and making an appearance in the red night.

"Let me introduce to you, Kazehaya Kamito. This is my contracted spirit—demon wind spirit, Simorgh!"

With a howl like the wind—The large eagle, clad in wind, swooped down.

Part 2

At a point of an attack in-place of a greeting, —

The demon wind spirit glided closer and dived with its aim at the ground, where the four were.

An ear-splitting thunderous roar. Stone paving came unstuck and large amounts of earth and sand were whirled up.

A strong wind, brought forth from the force of the explosion, hit Kamito and his body was easily blown away.

"...Gahaa!"

He was thrown into a wall. With that bone shattering impact, he stopped breathing for a moment.

Even if one received an attack of a spirit of a purified form, the physical body cannot be hurt, however, the physical damage from a crashing impact and fragments of rubble were different. Small rocks fluttering up in the squall were cutting at Kamito's whole body. While covering his forehead with both his hands, Kamito clicked his tongue.

(...What destructive power! If I took a blow directly, I'll faint.)

That demon wind spirit... Simorgh.

Comparing just destructive power, it might surpass even Claire's Scarlet.

(That's right, where's Claire?)

He stood up and surveyed his surroundings, his two allies were at their respective positions.

Claire was providing direct cover from a mid-distance. Rinslet was providing rear support with a long distance attack.

Carol was...waving a flag at the outside of the theater where she had escaped to.

The thunderous wind that was blowing violently stopped. At that interval, Kamito began to run—

"Not yet, Kamito!"

"...!?"

At the same time Claire shouted, the roar of the demon wind spirit resounded.

From an empty large hole in the ground, a large demon bird flapped its wings—

"What are you doing, quickly release your elemental waffe!"

"Hn, even if you say that—"

At that moment, a cluster of wind that held an enormous mass gouged the earth while rushing over.

The stone paving came ripping off in a straight line. Kamito quickly jumped sideways.

While tumbling on the ground, he quickly recited the summoning of the spirit language in his mouth.

The spirit seal faintly glowed, but as before, the path with the contracted spirit was not connected.

(... It's no good, huh!?)

Just as he was about to give up, a glowing short sword was constructed in his palm.

It was the same unreliable elemental waffe, but it was better than nothing.

"Are you just escaping? Kazehaya Kamito, I have misjudged you!"

Ellis, with a pony-tail hair swaying, alighted onto the ground.

"Ahh! I just have to fight, right—"

Kamito prepared the short sword and charged towards Ellis. The first to strike wins. If he defeated the elementalist first, then the summoned contracted spirit would vanish—

"Kamito, behind you!"

Claire's voice came from behind him—Kamito jumped straight to the side.

The wing of the demon wind spirit mowed down at the place Kamito was at just now.

"... What speed!"

Among the five grand spirits, the ones boasting of being the fastest were the wind-attribute spirits. And Ellis was completely controlling one of them.

The demon wind spirit, dancing in the night sky, turned in an arc—and swooped down.

Kamito jumped again. The demon wind spirit that crashed into the ground blew up a large quantity of earth and sand—and then it immediately transformed into countless blades of the wind and cut into Kamito's arms.

"...Kuu!"

Tremendous pain was running in his right arm. Actually, it did not mean that his arm was cut off—but that pain was violently jolting his consciousness.

(—Well, I never thought it'd turn into the blades of wind with that timing.)

Kamito was astonished in his mind. Ellis's competency as an elementalist was something substantial.

"Kamito, I'll cover you!"

At the same time as her voice, a blazing flame illuminated the night sky red.

Claire wielded Scarlet's elemental waffe—Flame Tongue.

The flame slash mowed down all the attacking blades of the wind in an arc—

"I won't let you interfere with the leader!"

The braided hair knight, Reishia, attacked Claire.

The elemental waffe held in her hand was a transparent ice sword—it seemed she was also an ice elementalist like Rinslet.

Nonetheless, her spirit's rank was completely no match for Rinslet's Fenrir. It seemed she had the competency to release her contracted spirit into its elemental waffe, but she had not made it hers yet.

She was not good enough to be a worthy adversary for Claire—Kamito concluded so and adjusted his direction to Ellis, who was in front of him.

In that moment, simultaneous with a violent blasting sound, the ground in front of him was being completely gouged.

"...!?"

"Huh, try taking on my elemental waffe—Rock Breaker!"

The short-haired knight, Rakka, shouted in a spirited tone.

Her specialized weapon was a large hammer with a long handle, which was easily being swung about by the thin arm of a girl.

Kamito jumped and backed away, getting some distance between them. She seemed more hot-blooded than Reishia.

While keeping his distance, he was chasing Ellis, who was within his sight—

Ellis had linked with Rakka's attack and was already moving.

As expected of the Knights' leader, Ellis' commanding ability was high.

First, she was to use her demon wind spirit to launch a preemptive attack to cause chaos on the battlefield. Next was to strike Claire on mid-guard with Reishia and Kamito on advance-guard with Rakka. While the two

were pinned down, Ellis with the most battle strength would attack Rinslet on rear-guard. That was the so-called strategy.

(... Before attacking Ellis, firstly, I have to do something about this fellow.)

Kamito nimbly stepped in and let loose a slash. The flash of the silver sword shallowly cut Rakka's arm.

As it was an attack from an elemental waffe, blood did not flow out—but pain should be felt in the same way.

"This guy...!"

Rakka's face was dyed in anger. She aimed at the top of Kamito's head and swung her Rock Breaker down.

There was a thunderous roar. The ground was gouged and rubbles were whirled up. It was probably a spirit of the earth attribute. As expected, its destructive power is great, but its movement was a large swing, making it easy to avoid.

"Chii, how restless!"

She too seemed to have yet to master her elemental waffe. Or perhaps, her contracted spirit's rank in contrast to her competency was too great—The spirit she was supposed to be using was manipulating her.

"Don't run, fight properly, male elementalist!"

"This doesn't mean that I'm just running away. In a group battle, you should pay more attention to your surroundings."

"What?"

"A capable hunter is taking aim."

At that moment, an ice arrow came flying and pierced the girl's chest.

Rakka was flashily blown away and bounced on the ground.

The elemental waffe, Rock Breaker, turned into particles of light and vanished.

"Fuu, nice shot!"

Kamito turned behind where the voice came from.

On the outer wall of the theater, there was the appearance of Rinslet brushing her hair.

"... Why are you, the support position, standing at such a conspicuous place?!"

"Ah, it's natural for me to be at a more conspicuous place than Claire!"

"Th...That stupid dog...! You were moving around and sniping, right!"

Claire shouted like she was gnawing.

"Fuu, as a worthy lady of the noble Laurenfrost family, I won't be satisfied if I'm not at the most conspicuous place at a dance party."

"That's milady!"

Carol was delightfully swinging a flag from above ground.

"Hmm, you're pretty composed, Raven Class!"

—At that moment, at the back a strong squall was winding up.

Spreading its wings, the demon wind spirit roared and flew with its aim at Rinslet.

"A good target! Freezing ice fang, pierce—Freezing Arrow!"

Rinslet quickly released the Freezing Arrow—

The demon wind spirit immediately transformed to the countless blades of wind and rushed at Rinslet.

"Kyaa!"

"Rinslet!?"

In front of Claire, who planned to rush over, the braided hair knight blocked her way.

She quickly entered into the range of the whip in the gap that Claire lost her focus and slashed with her ice sword. The moment she got into the range, a sword was overwhelmingly advantageous. Claire was gradually pressured.

"Why you! How dare you do this to Rakka!"

"Kuu—Kamito, chase Ellis!"

"Ahh!"

Claire was in a predicament, but Ellis ought to be stopped now.

Ellis was running on the stairs of the theater. Her intention was to completely take out Rinslet.

Kamito aimed at Ellis's legs and threw the short sword . He concluded that it was dangerous to ignore her—Ellis jumped to the side and got into the audience seating.

In the vicinity, a high-pitched sound reverberated. The elemental waffe short sword hit the wall and got smashed up.

"Hmm, that's a pretty fragile elemental waffe."

While Ellis said that, she called the demon wind spirit to her hand.

And then—

"—Evil winds, pierce through my sworn enemy's heart , become a demonic spear and lodge within my hand!"

The moment she recited the releasing in the spirit language—winds blew violently and in her hand a very long spear appeared.

It was a ceremonial long spear and delicate patterns were engraved on its handle.

Its tip, illuminated by the red moonlight, was clad in sharp winds and was faintly making wind sounds.

Her pony-tail hair, which reached her waist, was agitatedly swaying and flowing in the wind.

Ellis completely spun the spear in one hand and stared at Kamito with a cold expression.

"This is my elemental waffe—Ray Hawk."

Kamito—

"...Beautiful."

Without a thought, let out such a voice.

"Hah, you too understand—the beauty of this Ray Hawk."

Displaying her truly prided spear, Ellis loosened her cheeks, slightly delighted.

"Idiot, I mean you! Don't make me say that, it's embarrassing."

"Wha..? Me..!?"

Ellis turned bright red and became flustered.

"Hey, y...you're mocking me, right? Kazehaya Kamito! "

"No, I'm just normally entranced."

"E...Entranced... Ah....."

Ellis's face increasingly redden... as if purging evil thoughts, she shook her head.

"Ehh...Such a practical joke... As I thought, you are mocking me!"

"No, you really are beautiful—Owaa!"

Being enraged, Ellis thrust her spear with her face bright red.

As a result of losing her composure, it was easy to dodge.

However, when the demonic spear tip grazed the side of his abdomen, at that moment—

The blades of winds were released and cut his whole body.

(Guu...!?)

In response to the sharp pain, Kamito clicked his tongue in his mind.

(—That elemental waffe can create the blades of wind, huh!)

While bearing the pain attacking his whole body, Kamito jumped away to the back in one go.

That demonic spear could create the blades of wind, so there also was no point in evading with a paper-thin difference.

However, Ellis jumped again and released a stream of attacks like a tempest.

"Are you trying to escape... you insolent guy! I'll turn you into tiramisu[9]!"

"What? Is candy-making also your forte? You cute sullen young lady."

"I...I am currently practicing making candies. For the sake of the gentleman that I'll marry in the future—Eh... What did you make me say! And who's the sullen young lady!"

Ellis pierced the theater wall with all her might in one blow and fragments of rubble flew around.

(...This person, she's seriously strong!)

As expected of someone who served as the Knights leader in this academy that gathered elementalists.

It was a beautiful blade dance like modeling after Kagura, which spirits enjoyed themselves in.

The wound in his left hand ached.

He understood that his senses were gradually getting sharper.

The serious blade dance was causing his blood to boil.

His body was recalling the sensations from three years ago.

(However, it wasn't something like this.)

It was irritating that his legs did not move as he wanted. His instinctive ability to read his opponent's movements was also falling.

(I—)

"You, don't run!"

Releasing a sharp thirst for blood and being clad in gales, Ellis came attacking.

It was not a clever thrust. It was a blow with all her might to decide the match.

However, there was a fatal chance born—

"Freezing Ice Fang, pierce—Freezing Arrow!"

Rinslet, who had recovered and was awaiting for a chance to snipe, released her Freezing Arrow without delay.

Simultaneously—

"Dance, crimson flame that invites ruins—Hell Blaze!"

After Claire settled Reishia, she released her flame attribute elemental waffe.

"...!?"

Ellis opened both her eyes in surprise.

The timing was perfect. The released ice fang and infernal flame went straight at their target—

Pariiiin!

They collided with each other in the air.

"...Wha!?"

Kamito's face twitched.

Ellis, in front of him, was also standing still, dumbfounded.

"Hey, Rinslet! Why did you get in my way!"

"W...What? You're the one who should not get in my way."

At that moment, the two of them began to quarrel.

"T...Those two..."

Kamito forgot that he was in the midst of the duel and deeply sighed.

(...They have the ability, yet their teamwork is really all over the place.)

"—How foolish, to fall out among yourselves!"

Ellis Fahrengart raised her elemental waffe spear once again.

Thunderously, a strong wind, unseen before, was winding up.

"T..To make a mockery of me by saying that I'm beautiful, I'll make you regret—"

There was already nowhere to run to. Kamito resigned his fate, at that time—

"Wait, Ellis! Something is strange..."

"What? Now then you're begging for your life."

Stopping mid-way—Ellis shut her mouth.

It seemed she noticed it too.

"What, this presence is ...?"

The atmosphere of the vicinity was heavy. That sensation, like one's back turning chilly, was—

"What?"

"What is this?"

Claire and the others seemed to have noticed it too. They looked up at the hazy night sky and tilted their heads in confusion.

Suddenly, a thunder-like sound roared.

And then—from a tear in the sky, that appeared.

Part 3

That was—a giant jaw, floating in the sky.

It had neither head nor body nor a tail. It was an eerie jaw with just rows of teeth lined up making a chattering sound.

"That's, ...don't tell me, ... a demon spirit!?"

The sudden appearance of that spirit made Kamito groan and terrified him.

A demon spirit—that was something with a spirit make-up that greatly differed from humans, and thus, that was a grotesque spirit that can never be tamed by elementalists.

"A demon spirit, why is it at such a place...?"

At that moment.

"Vo...Ruooooooooon—"

The demon spirit's rising ear-splitting roar caused the girls to cower.

There was a tremendous sense of intimidation. That divine power felt on his skin was comparable to a devil-class (rank A) spirit.

Moreover—

(It's... going berserk?)

Kamito dropped his voice and carefully observed the demon spirit in sky.

A demon spirit was certainly a grotesque being, but it's unlikely that it would be going berserk without a reason.

(...What's going on?)

Groaning within his mind—Kamito recalled.

That reminded him, before the duel—the water spirit of the spirit device in Claire's room had went out of control.

It was a phenomenon that was normally unimaginable , but if the water spirit was in a frenzy at that time, it was

natural that Claire also could not control it. ...Was that phenomenon something related?

Besides—

(Claire said that powerful spirits don't appear frequently in this area.)

For the appearance of that demon spirit to be by chance, it was too unnatural.

(What the heck—?)

The jaw floating in the sky mowed down many trees of the forest, and bit and crushed the ancient historic ruins to tiny pieces. The smashed-up rock fragments rained down from high in the sky.

"Claire Rouge, for now, we'll stop the duel. Is that alright?"

"...I understand."

Claire obediently nodded at Ellis's words.

Everyone in this place understood the danger from that demon spirit.

It did not mean that that was summoned in a purified form like contracted spirits.

If bitten by those teeth, the human body and so forth will be like mere scraps of paper.

"We're taking refuge. I'll take the rear, you all carry the fainted two."

Ellis prepared the Ray Hawk and gallantly got down to the center of the historic ruins.

"No, I'll take the rear. That is not something an ordinary elementalist can do one way or another."

The way of fighting spirits and fighting human elementalists were completely different. Of course, this didn't mean that the girls didn't learn how to fight spirits but—it was an opponent too dangerous for Ellis to fight alone.

"Stop the jokes. What can you, who can't even fully use his contracted spirit, do?"

"That's..."

Kamito firmly groaned. Certainly, it was not an opponent he could fight with that unreliable elemental waffe.

"There's no time to talk. Leave this to Ellis, let's hurry!"

Rinslet whistled and Fenrir, in a white wolf appearance, came giving both fainted Reishia and Rakka a lift. Carol also came running.

"Claire, what are you doing daydreaming!"

Rinslet pulled Claire's sleeves.

—Claire was looking downwards like she was thinking about something and she suddenly raised her head.

"Ellis, I'll take the rear."

"What?"

Ellis opened her eyes. Claire whipped her leather whip and called out her contracted spirit, the hell cat.

"..."

Claire's red pupils became nailed onto the figure of the demon spirit, raging like a storm.

...It was like she was completely entranced.

In response to Claire's appearance—Kamito realized and was taken aback.

(This fellow, don't tell me—)

Claire was obsessed with obtaining a powerful spirit.

For the sake of knowing the truth concerning her sister , Rubia Elstein, she needed power.

Therefore, she still reached out to the dangerous sealed spirit.

"You, don't tell me—You plan to make **that** your contracted spirit!?"

"..."

Claire did not answer. She just motionlessly gazed at the demon spirit in the sky—

"That's crazy! That's a demon spirit, furthermore it's in a frenzy!"

Kamito shouted, Claire swung her twintails and finally turned around.

"...It's a once in a lifetime chance."

She bit her lips and muttered with an expression like she had thought hard over it.

"Firstly, there's no such thing as encountering a spirit of that level in the Spirit Forest. Besides, it's not like there weren't any elementalists who contracted demon spirits."

"You mean Greyworth? She's a witch."

"I too may have the qualities of a witch."

"Stop doing something stupid, you'll die."

Kamito grabbed Claire's arm, who was planning to dash anytime.

Claire sternly glared at Kamito.

"Don't get in my way. My reasons to want a strong spirit, I've told them to you, right?"

"Ahh, I understand. But that's no good. Your skills can't manage it."

"...Shut up, let go! You weakling, be silent!"

Claire shook Kamito's arm and shouted.

Within her ruby pupils, glaring at Kamito, genuine hatred surfaced.

"Despite snatching my sealed spirit! You can only use a weak elemental waffe, what qualifications do you have to say something?"

"That's—"

Kamito looked downwards. It was natural for Claire to be irritated. While he had indeed contracted with such a powerful spirit, he couldn't pull out its power completely .

"What? ... I was expecting a little something."

Claire awkwardly averted her eyes.

"I'll handle that alone. You all please escape."

"Claire Rouge, you—"

"Ellis, try to protect everyone. I don't want to think about it, but if I—"

Claire did not speak after that.

And then—

"—Scarlet!"

She called her partner, flame spirit's name and ran towards the demon spirit, devouring the forest.

"Claire!"

Kamito held out his hand in a fluster.

At that moment, the demon spirit roared.

A lump of shock struck. The trees in its vicinity were thoroughly blown off.

"Winds, grant us the hand of divine protection—Wind Wall!"

Right away, Ellis recited the spirit magic and protected everyone at the back.

(Damn, Claire—)

While defending against the pebbles that were blown off, Kamito followed Claire with his eyes.

Claire was—dancing in the air.

She got on the winds like sparks dancing in the air.

In her hand was her flame spirit released into its elemental waffe—Flame Tongue, which she was grasping.

The blazing crimson killing flash cut off the evening darkness.

Claire landed onto the ground and while running through the gaps of the tree grove, she drew closer to the demon spirit.

The demon spirit opened its giant jaws and made chattering sounds with its lined-up rows of teeth.

(...It's no good, this is too reckless!)

The girl, Claire Rouge, that Kamito knew was an excellent elementalist, possessing calm judgment and an insight for tactics at least in a battle.

However, she had lost sight of herself now.

Her feelings for her sister, Rubia Elstein, caused her to lose her calm judgment.

Her anger towards her sister, who betrayed her. Yet, her overwhelming love—caused a great number of conflicts to be mixed and that changed into a craving for great power.

"How tenacious! Become mine!"

The flame whip dance splendidly. Her red twintails danced in the dark night.

That was—elementalist, Claire Rouge's blade dance.

"..."

Beautiful—he thought.

Despite being at such a time, Kamito, for a moment, was fascinated by that appearance and forgot everything.

...It was the same as that time.

That time when she was fighting that rampaging sword spirit alone.

Kamito calmly clenched his fist and turned behind. And then—

"Ellis, Rinslet, I'll entrust the rest to you."

"Wha... are you an idiot!?" "Are you an idiot!?"

Both of them shouted at the same time. His ears shrilled.

"...Ah, I'm an idiot. Truly an idiot."

If Greyworth was here, she would have had relentlessly poured abusive words.

To take back the precious thing he lost, he had lived with lifeless eyes for these past three years.

Yet, he was recklessly giving his life away for such a thing.

However—

"I am her contracted spirit."

Therefore—

"That's, hm, I have to help her, that tomboy hell cat girl ."

"Wait, Kazehaya Kamito!"

Kamito shook off Ellis's hand that planned to stop him and began running.

The crimson flame was dancing with the demon spirit in a blade dance.

It was no good for that noble flame to be extinguished. —He did not want her to die.

After all, she was—a normal girl.

Full of conceit, hot-tempered.

Putting on a strong front, easily lonely.... truly kind.

Liking canned foods and romance stories—

Merely a princess found anywhere.

"Oooooo...oon—"

The demon spirit roared.

It released a shock wave blowing away the forest and Claire was thrown onto the ground.

"—Claire!"

Part 4

"...Ah...Aah, Ah..."

Claire was thrown onto the ground and cowered.

The grotesque demon spirit made a creaky sound with its giant jaw.

It seemed—like it was laughing.

She planned to escape, but her legs were shivering and did not move.

It was frightening. While she was fighting, her senses became paralyzed. However, presently—

"Y...You are not scary, therefore, become my manservant!"

The demon spirit, floating in the air, had no reason to even respond to that jeer but—it loudly laughed.

Claire's body trembled and spontaneously, she closed her eyes. The roots of the teeth did not bite at the same time. Towards an unfamiliar thing, instinctive fear bound her body.

—At that moment. The Flame Tongue in Claire's hand suddenly vanished.

It was not that she canceled the release of her elemental waffe. Scarlet opposed Claire's will and voluntary returned to the form of a hell cat.

"Scarlet!? Why...?"

Claire muttered in a blurry voice.

Was she finally being abandoned by even her contracted spirit—

However, the hell cat, clad in flames softly growled and kicked the ground and flew up.

"...!"

At that moment, Claire finally understood. Scarlet—

"Noo—Scarlet!"

Claire's scream resounded.

Scarlet did not stop. It bared its ferocious fangs and rushed at the demon spirit.

It was a red hot flame that even melted steel. However, it was not effective against the demon spirit.

In an instant, the demon spirit's teeth mercilessly bit and crushed Scarlet's body.

It screamed with agony. The flame spirit, which was bitten and crushed, vanished in the sky like a whirlpool winding.

"...Ah...Scar...let..."

Claire, as if all her body strength left her, sank down to the floor there.

Following reason, she knew that she should be escaping.

It was a last chance Scarlet made for her.

Despite that, her legs were trembling bit by bit. She could not even stand.

The extreme deep despair paralyzed Claire's whole body.

(Because of me, Scarlet—)

In the blank eyes, where the flame vanished, tears overflowed.

(...I'm an idiot. Kamito stopped me and yet—)

(—despite being unable to win, I plunged in alone.)

She was unsightly defeated.

Her contracted spirit, which was precious to her like family, was also lost.

While the demon spirit was making the chattering sound, it slowly descended.

Those sinister teeth that just ate and tore up Scarlet—

"No..."

Tears flowed along her cheeks. A stiff voice came out from deep in her throat.

"Save me... Save me—Nee-sama[10]!"

She closed her eyes in despair and at that time.

"Claire!"

She heard his voice.

Part 5

"Ooooooooooo!"

While making his war cry, Kamito rushed towards the demon spirit.

The spirit seal, engraved on his right hand, emitted a bluish-white glow.

—Dispassionate Queen of Steel, the sacred sword that destroys evil!

—Now form a sword of steel and be the power in my hand!

While running with mud splashing, he recited the summoning.

At his palm, particles of light were born and transformed into the form of a sword—

However, it was not good like this. Against the demon spirit that brought down Scarlet's level of spirit in one blow, that short sword cannot be effective.

(—I beg you, lend me your power, you stubborn spirit!)

(—Come on, I know you've got more power than that!)

The wound on his left hand sharply ached.

Again, the opened path with the contracted spirit was closed—

However, without minding it, Kamito continued to pour divine power into the spirit seal on his right hand.

It was an intense overload. Pain like burning was running throughout his arm's nerves.

(—Sorry, Restia. What I need now isn't you.)

Yes—what he needed was not the past.

It was the power to protect her here and now.

From the spirit seal on his left hand, violent flashes of lightning surged.

That sensation from three years ago was resurrected.

Everytime he kicked the ground to speed up, his whole body's sensation sharpened.

Just that demon spirit's movement was seen as slow motion.

(Recall it, that feeling—)

The sensation of the blade dance—where he danced together with his partner, the dark spirit.

(I am—)

Kamito kicked the ground and jumped high up.

(I am the Strongest Blade Dancer—Ren Ashbell!)

At that moment, a conspicuous dazzling flash was born in his palm.

From the spirit seal on his right hand, a huge amount of divine power came surging out.

The path to that sealed sword spirit was connected!

At the next moment, in Kamito's hand; he was grasping a large broadsword.

It was too gigantic for normal people to wield—the Demon Slayer.

And then—

"—Begone, you overgrown jaw."

The swing of the lump of the steel cut the demon spirit jaw cleanly in half.

Part 6

The rain that began falling soaked Claire's back.

Her red twintails withered and closely clung onto her bare skin.

"Claire..."

Kamito called out to her back, which was cowering on the ground.

"Hmm... it's good that you're safe."

"It's...not good..."

Claire muttered in a shivering voice.

"My... My Scarlet..."

She turned around and from her red pupils, a drop of tear came out.

"You—"

"You're late... Idiot! Despite being my contracted spirit."

"Ahh. My bad..."

Kamito awkwardly looked away.

"Why?"

"Eh?"

"You have such great power and yet, at the beginning, why—?"

Claire firmly grabbed Kamito's uniform collar—

"..."

She weakly removed her hand.

"...No. It's because I'm weak."

She let out such a defeated voice.

"It's because I'm weak, that I couldn't protect Scarlet. It's because I'm weak—"

—She could not stop her sister.

"If I had more, more power, such..."

While being struck by rain, Claire repeated that with a blank expression.

"Oi, get yourself together!"

Kamito grabbed Claire's shoulder—

(...Eh?)

His body slanted.

His field of vision was growing dark. ...His consciousness suddenly went far away.

It seemed that the strike of the previous elemental waffe had thoroughly exhausted his divine power.

(Damn, what a greedy... spirit...)

While cursing in his mind, Kamito lost consciousness.

Chapter 7: Contracted Spirit Est

Part 1

.....He remembered that he was taken into a black room.

A room like a prison cell without windows.

He recalled being taken by people in black, also on that day he met **her** for the first time—

It was eight years ago when the young boy became The Strongest Blade Dancer—Ren Ashbell.

Before that, he was at an orphanage.

It was no ordinary orphanage. It was a so called " Instructional School" of a town that didn't exist on any maps.

From every part of the continent, young girls with talents as an elementalist were gathered from orphanages or relief institutions, and received special training in the secret facility. Those who were raised there were exceptional assassins. The emotions of the girls were killed by the crazy education, and nothing but killing

techniques using spirits were thoroughly drilled into them.

On that day eight years ago, a young boy who was taken in by the Instructional School was able to communicate with the spirits.

The Demon King's Reincarnation—called a miracle child by the training instructor, that young boy was trained with the highest priority.

He was subjected to assassination training of the highest caliber, as well as handing to him their treasured spirit, one of the most powerful Pillar Spirits.

Formerly, a sealed spirit because of the Demon King, the Dark Spirit.

But, four years ago, a freak accident of unknown origin suddenly destroyed the Instructional School.

Thanks to the incident, the hideous truth of the Instructional School was brought to light, and the aristocrat faction in charge of the scheme was purged; its existence was erased from all the records of the Ordesia empire.

The young boy escaped with his contracted spirit.

Running away from his pursuers, he disguised himself as a girl. Originally the young boy had well equipped features; his voice had yet to break, and nobody thought that he was a boy.

Also, three years ago. The strongest blade dancer magnificently debuted.

Winning the Blade Dance, in order to fulfill **her** one and only Wish.

But, it was— **something humans must never wish for**.

Part 2

Kamito opened his eyes and found himself lying in bed.

Birds were chirping outside the window. Bright morning light entered into the room.

He strongly felt that he had a very nostalgic dream, but couldn't remember what it was about.

His head hurt. Kamito slowly turned his head and sat up. Then he noticed.

What he was wearing was not the Areishia Spirit Academy school uniform. It seemed that someone had helped him into pajamas. The freshly washed clothes were very comfortable.

"By the way... where am I?"

Kamito looked around the room.

The layout of the room was very familiar. This must be the dormitory of the academy.

However, this was not Claire's room. It was impossible for her room to be so clean. The furniture and household items looked very upscale and was polished spotless. The room was like a luxury hotel. It did feel like a girl's room, but with a different perspective from Claire's.

He moved his arms to get out of bed—but a sharp burning pain shot up from his right hand.

Grimacing from the intense pain, Kamito finally remembered.

(At that time, I.....)

In order to protect Claire, Kamito had surpassed the limit to release the contract spirit's power.

Conjuring up a powerful Elemental Waffe was of course good. But since the spirit was too strong, his divine energy was exhausted all at once, and he had passed out.

(Right, ...How was Claire?)

Kamito was going to get up from bed, but at that moment—

(Hm?)

Something squirmed inside the sheets.

"Wow! What... What the hell!?"

Kamito bounced up and quickly yanked the sheets aside.

Something unbelievable was there.

A silver-haired girl.

And she was naked, stark naked.

No, more precisely she was not completely naked; she had black knee socks on.

A knee socks wearing, nude, silver-haired girl was there.

...Silence for about a full half minute.

"...Who are you?" Asked Kamito. His head was spinning, and he couldn't come up with any other questions.

"Est." The girl expressionlessly replied. It was a cold and mechanical-sounding voice.

"Est... so that's your name?"

"Right. Human vocal organs are incapable of pronouncing my true name, so call me Est."

"Well, Est."

"Yes."

One would blink in amazement at the clear violet eyes of the beautiful silver-haired girl.

She seemed to be younger than Kamito.

Her body was very petite, maybe even smaller than Claire's.

"Uh... Why... are you... in my bed?"

"Because I belong to you, my master."

The girl answered with no hesitation.

"....."

Cold sweat flowed down from Kamito's forehead.

...Wait. Calm down. He had no memory of such a thing. Wrong, isn't the fact that he didn't remember anything about it even worse?

(Why am I in bed with a naked girl? Kazehaya Kamito, were you really such a despicable pervert that stripped innocent little girls and then brought them to bed?)

(NO! Absolutely not!)

"Hey, Est."

"Yes, master."

"Why are you calling me master? Please briefly explain ."

"Because master is my master. Was there any self-contradiction? "

Est replied expressionlessly.

"Or would you like me to call you differently?"

"For now, anything other than master."

"Well, Aniue-sama[11] ."

"No."

"Daddy."

"Even worse!"

"...Onii-chan?"[12]

"...Uh... no!"

Kamito averted his eyes slightly. Involuntarily, he felt that the last one was quite good.

"My bad. Kamito, please call me Kamito."

"Got it. I'll call you Kamito."

The knee-socks wearing nude silver-haired girl nodded.

Kamito... Kamito... my master is Kamito... the girl murmured, as if constantly chewing these words.

Kamito's head gradually started aching. What is with this girl?

"Why are you wearing nothing but knee socks? Isn't it odd?"

"Are you saying that I should take the socks off!?"

Est's normally expressionless face showed a sign of wavering for the first time.

"Actually demanding me to show my bare feet... Kamito is such a pervert."

"No, aren't you naked? What is this mysterious sense of embarrassment?"

Kamito sighed. Oh, well, perhaps it was due to cultural difference.

At this point, suddenly the sound of someone coming up the stairs was heard through the door.

"...Oh, no! Someone is coming!"

It would be bad, regardless of whom, for anyone to see this situation.

"Hide somewhere now!"

"Why?"

"No questions! Hurry up!"

"Oui[13], roger that."

Est wiggled deep into the sheets.

"Why there out of all places!"

Snip—

At this instant, the door opened.

"Kamito, you woke up!"

Rinslet's maid Carol appeared. She was carrying a basin and towels.

"Carol!? That you are here means this is—"

"The room of milady, Rinslet."

Carol smiled.

I see. Indeed she was a daughter of the Laurenfrost family. No wonder the room was so different from Claire's.

"By the way, why am I in Rinslet's room?"

"Milady was very worried because you fainted and had you carried here. She and I took care of you."

"......So that's why. Thank you."

Kamito felt very grateful. That girl was surprisingly a good person.

Carol walked over towards the bed.

(...Oh, no!)

The moment Kamito put on the alert posture, Est squirmed in the sheets.

Kamito's body suddenly involuntarily froze.

(Hey... Hey! Come on. Please stay still!)

"You woke up, Kazehaya Kamito."

Snip— this time the uniformed Rinslet came in.

Although he thought Rinslet would breathe a sigh of relief, but she put two hands upon her waist, and glared sharply at Kamito.

"...I was so startled because you suddenly fainted."

"Ah, My bad. I heard that you have been taking care of me. Thank you."

"Humph! Taking care of the servants is also the duty of a master!"

Rinslet's face suddenly became red and she looked away.

"...Besides, you saved my friend..."

"Well?"

"Nothing...!"

Rinslet suddenly folded her arms, and turned her face aside.

Her behavior of not being frank with herself was somehow quite lovely, actually.

"By the way, how is Claire?" Asked Kamito. Back then Claire looked very haggard, and something was obviously wrong.

(...Hopefully she was not thinking something strange.)

"She locked herself in her room the moment she came back to the academy and has stayed there since then. No matter how much I provoked her from outside the door, she completely refuses to come out."

"So..."

Kamito sighed. It seemed that even that defiant princess could suffer from depression. Although she acted very tough, she was just an ordinary girl after all.

"Milady is really worried about her childhood friend Miss Claire."

"Carol! What, what are you talking about!" Red faced Rinslet repeatedly beat Carol on her back.

Looking at the exchange between the two girls, Kamito smiled bitterly.

(...Ah. That girl, even though she was seemingly convinced that she was alone,)

(She does have good friends.)

"What is it, Kazehaya Kamito? Why are you smiling?"

Rinslet puffed her cheeks and stared at Kamito.

"Since you have woken up, get out already. Men are prohibited in the female dormitory!"

"Ah, Oh. I'll go out now..... uh!"

Just then, Kamito suddenly froze.

...That couldn't be. He absolutely could not get out of bed now. Hidden under the sheets was a young, beautiful nude girl who was wearing knee socks.

This was bad. Extremely bad. If she was to be discovered by these two girls, his life will be in danger in all kinds of ways.

(What should I do... right!)

Kamito needed to change from pajamas into his uniform. Using that as an excuse, he could send Rinslet and Carol away, then take this opportunity to escape with Est from the window.

No, no good. To go out with Est in her current state, they would surely be caught.

If they were to be dragged to that stubborn leader of the Knights, he would end up even more miserable.

That being the case, he had to—

"Uh... right! Can I ask for a favor?"

"What's that? Do you... want to lick my toes?"

"No one asked for such a thing!"

Kamito retorted out of reflex... Why was there an expectation in her tone?

"That's not what I want to ask. I was thinking... if you could lend me some clothes."

"Clothes? Oh, of course, your uniform is right here."

Rinslet snapped her fingers, and Carol immediately brought out the folded uniform. The ripped uniform from battle yesterday was mended, even the buttons were sewn back on neatly.

"That's not what I meant. I would like to borrow a girl's uniform. "

"....."

(Eh? I feel like I have made some kind of fatal mistake just now...)

Rinslet stared at Kamito as if looking at a cockroach on the roadside.

"Oh? What do you plan to do with a girl's uniform, Kazehaya Kamito?"

Gogogogo...

"No... No, not what you think... uh... that..."

Kamito stammered, trying to find excuses to gloss over the question.

"Then it can't be helped. Although it is a bit embarrassing, I'll lend you my clothes..."

Carol's face turned red, and she started to remove her clothes uneasily.

"Not your clothes! And that's not even a uniform!"

"So that's how it is. What Kamito-sama desires most is a uniform of milady."

"What? ...My uniform?"

Rinslet suddenly blushed totally red, and quickly covered her chest.

(Ah ah ah ah! These two are so troublesome!)

Kamito cried in his mind. Just at this time.

From the abdomen of Kamito somehow came a wiggling sensation.

(...! Est! What are you doing!)

"Hmm? Kazehaya Kamito, what are you doing?"

"No... Nothing..."

"You have been acting strange since earlier. Come to think of it, the sheets are bulging mysteriously."

"Milady, men are the kind of creatures to bulge in the morning."

"Yes... a normal physiological phenomenon, it can't be helped... **That's not what this is!**"

"Out with it already, what exactly are you hiding there !?"

Paa-tsu— Rinslet forcefully yanked the sheets off.

"What!" "Ah!"

Rinslet and Carol simultaneously covered their mouths, and opened their eyes widely.

It was no wonder. In the bed, after all, there was one beautiful knee socks wearing naked girl.

"Kamito, we are caught."

Still expressionless, Est suddenly hugged Kamito tightly.

"Wh... Wh... What!"

"Hold on! Rinslet, don't misunderstand! This is because—"

Kamito frantically shook his head, trying desperately to explain.

"This is because what?"

"Uh... because... that..."

...Uh, no good. Even Kamito didn't know why the young girl was here.

Having said that, regardless of what excuses that Kamito came up with, he had no confidence to convince these two.

"—I see, that's how it was."

Rinslet grinned, and a chilling smile appeared on her face.

An elegant, graceful, and truly aristocratic smile.

"You... You understand?"

"Yes, I completely understand. While I was worried about you, you...you secretly brought such a lovely girl to bed—"

Rinslet's freezing cold stares repeatedly stabbed Kamito.

Or rather... it was really cold, cold enough to freeze one to death.

Unknowingly, the windows were covered with frost. Just as one thought that a blizzard was bursting around in the room, the wolf spirit of demon ice suddenly appeared on top of the bed.

"...Wait! This is no joke—I am really going to die!"

"Then... Then die! You pervert—!"

Demon Ice Spirit Fenrir let out a terrifying roar, then started attacking Kamito.

"...Wahh! For real!?"

Kamito nimbly jumped out of bed and fled around in the room.

Baring its fangs, the Demon Ice Spirit chased Kamito back and forth.

Bark! *Bark!*

"....."

At this moment, Est quietly rose up and stood in front of Kamito as if to shield him.

The white wolf bared its sharp fangs fiercely, and then leaped.

Still expressionless, Est thrust her hand in front of the nose of the white wolf.

Fenrir's movement suddenly froze.

"Woo...ong..."

"Stay back! How dare you as a Demon Ice Spirit try to defy me, the Demon Slayer? "

The moment Est calmly finished her words, Fenrir began to tremble.

And then—

"Sit."

Chokun[14].

"Hand."

Pofu.

"Good boy."

Rub. *Rub*.

"....."

Kamito was speechless. Rinslet's mouth also hung wide open.

Even spirits of the rank of Fenrir were lead by the nose . This girl, could she be—

"Might you be a spirit!?"

"Yes, I'm Kamito's contracted spirit."

Stroking the head of the tamed Fenrir, Est nodded expressionlessly.

Part 3

"Unbelievable. I never expected you to be the sealed spirit of that sword."

Having left the female dormitory and walking in the academy's courtyard, Kamito took a glance at the girl next to him.

Of course, she was not naked. Currently, she was wearing the school uniform of Areishia Spirit Academy.

The spirits that had a human form were the highest rank in Astral Zero. So it is understandable that Kamito did not immediately discover the girl's true identity.

"I mean, you can reconstruct clothes, so why were you naked?"

"I thought you would be pleased that way. Or do I really have to show you my bare feet?"

It seemed that this spirit would be embarrassed if she exposed her bare feet. Such an obscure type of shyness.

Kamito sighed, and tried to sort out what he had talked about with Est.

— Back then Est resonated to Kamito's strong will, and was summoned in the form of an Elemental Waffe. However, at the same time when Kamito lost his consciousness, the Magic Circuit (Path) was once again closed, and she ended up not being able to return to Astral Zero.

"Why was the Magic Circuit (Path) not connected? We did form the contract after all."

"One factor is that my original existence is an overly powerful being, but probably the main cause is from Kamito yourself. Subconsciously, Kamito was **rejecting the contract with me**."

"....."

Kamito had an idea. His eyes rested on the left hand in the black leather gloves.

Back then to save Claire, Kamito strived to not ponder over it.

But it is undeniable, **her** presence still haunts the heart of Kamito.

"...Sorry. It is not that I was unwilling to contract with you. That's not how it was."

Not being able to return to Astral Zero puts an enormous stress on the Spirits.

However, most of Est's power was left in Astral Zero, so at the moment she's seemingly unable to display her original strength.

Perhaps because Est took the form of a human girl, Kamito became more distressed.

"It does not matter. Anyway, I'm tired of being sealed inside the sword. It has been hundreds of years since I last came to this world, so I decided to enjoy everything here. Say, Kamito—"

Est pulled the sleeve of Kamito's uniform.

"It feels like I have a good impression of you."

"...A good impression?"

"Meaning that I might like you."

"Ah. So... thank you."

Kamito could not help but blush, and averted his eyes.

Despite being a sealed spirit with extraordinary power , her appearance was that of a lovely girl.

To receive such a straight confession... Kamito did not know how to respond.

"But when you were sealed inside the sword, haven't you rejected contracting with all the other elementalists?"

"Yes, Kamito. So far, I have rejected 53 elementalists."

"Then why has such a high rank spirit like you chosen me?"

"Well, if I had to guess—it might have been an intuition."

Est watched Kamito with the pair of clear violet eyes.

"Because I felt- that the two of us are alike."

"...What do you mean?"

"Kamito."

Est suddenly held out her forefinger and gently pressed it against Kamito's lips.

"Do not pry into a girl's secrets!"

"...!"

A completely unexpected reaction. Kamito's heart raced at the soft touch of her fingertip.

Then, her skirt twirled as Est quickly turned around. She ran forward lightly.

Going a long way from the dormitory, Kamito finally arrived at the school building of the academy.

(Could Claire be here?) After being driven out of Rinslet's room, Kamito immediately went to Claire's room to check on her, but she was not in the room.

Maybe she had already recovered, and went to the class to attend the lectures.

It was good if that's the case- but somehow his heart jittered anxiously.

While walking together with Est in the corridor, Kamito heard whispers constantly coming from all directions.

"Look. Look. There's that male transfer student."

"As expected, he has already laid his hands on a new girl."

"What a pretty girl... did we have such a student in our academy?"

"Hey. Is it true that Ellis' group engaged in a duel with him?"

"He can't be planning on laying his hands on every girl in the academy, can he?"

"What a pervert... or rather, a lewd beast?"

"Definitely a lewd beast."

"Yeah, a lewd beast."

"Public enemy of the girls..."

Twitter twitter...

...Kamito's heart hurt. The target of this chattering had heard everything.

"Is Kamito really a lewd beast?"

Est dealt a further blow. Well, she meant no harm.

Clink— the sound of a sword being drawn came from the back at that moment.

"—Kazehaya Kamito, you indecent man!"

"...!"

With no time to turn around, the blade had come to rest on the back of his neck.

Kamito raised both his hands, and timidly moved nothing but his line of sight—

Standing there was the pony-tailed leader of the Knights, emitting a terrifying murderous intent.

"E...Ellis...?"

"I misjudged you, you sex maniac! How could you lay your hands on such an innocent girl!"

"...Listen."

Kamito sighed, and said with half squinted eyes: "You have just made a very rude misunderstanding about others. She's my contract spirit."

"......What?"

Ellis raised her eyebrows in surprise.

"You are saying this girl is that Sword Spirit that slayed the Demon Spirit with one blow?"

Ellis skeptically stared at Est for a moment, then turned back to Kamito again.

"Stop making lame excuses, Kazehaya Kamito!"

Clang- the blade came to rest on his neck again.

But the next second, Ellis's startled eyes widened.

The blade that was stabbed towards the back of his neck turned soft and bent down.

"What is going on?"

"Property Howling Resonance- as a sword spirit, I can freely interfere with various blades. Are you willing to believe us now?"

"...!"

Ellis, with her eyes wide open, examined the bent sword.

Spirit magic could bring about similar phenomenon, but Est bent the sword without even lifting a finger.

"I see. ...Sorry for having doubted you."

Ellis put away the sword, and apologized seriously with a bow.

"No. Originally, even I did not think she was a spirit."

Kamito shrugged and shook his head.

Although there were times where she was overly stubborn, but this candor was also endearing.

"By the way, how are the other two? Hm, from the Knight Brigade—"

"You mean Rakka and Reishia? They regained consciousness this morning. They were beaten pretty badly by you guys. They need to rest for a while before they can control spirits again."

"Sorry... Once I use an Elemental Waffe, it is difficult to calibrate my strength."

"It was a duel. Please do not mind it. For them it was a good lesson."

Ellis deliberately coughed, and then—

"...I'm sorry."

"Hmm?"

"I said, I'm sorry. I disliked you for no other reason except that you are a boy. So I feel compelled to apologize."

With her cheeks blushing red, she stared into the eyes of Kamito.

"When you stood up to the Demon Spirit to save Claire Rouge, you looked really... really cool. To be honest I was petrified with fear."

"I had to deal with frenzied spirits several times before . It was just experience."

Kamito, scratched the back of his head, like he was feeling a bit shy.

"Kamito, I dislike being ignored." Est said, puffing out her cheeks.

"Oh, sorry..."

Then, Kamito suddenly recalled his purpose here.

"Ellis, do you know where Claire is?"

"Isn't Claire Rouge still locking herself in her room? Losing the contract spirit seemed to be a very big blow to her."

"But she doesn't seem to be in her room. Do you have a clue?"

"Well..."

Ellis raised her hand to her chin and pondered a bit.

"Come to think of it, the militarized spirit contract ceremony will be held in the academic town this afternoon."

"Contract ceremony?"

"Ah, volunteers are recruited among the students of the academy to form a contract with militarized spirits."

In short, it is scouting from the military—Ellis explained.

In return for the powerful militarized spirit provided by the Ordesia Knights brigade, the academy presents the students. Once the student forged a contract with the militarized spirit, he or she becomes part of the army, and as a cost for the powerful militarized spirit, he must obey the orders and be dispatched immediately whenever requested by the brigade.

"Although there are a lot of troubles in becoming a military personnel, there are many voluntary participants seeking to form contracts with powerful spirits. From the very beginning, there are many students who entered the academy aiming to become Spirit Knights."

"With so many participants, how do they pick candidates?"

"Of course—with a blade dance."

The format of the competition was a free for all battle royal.

Serving also as a demonstration from the Ordesia Knight Brigade to the public, the blade dance would be held in the arena of the academy town, rather than in Astral Zero.

"Having lost her contract spirit, it is possible that she will volunteer to participate in the ceremony."

"However, without her contract spirit, to enter a blade dance is—" Kamito stopped in mid-sentence and swallowed the remaining words.

Impossible—but he was not sure.

To perform blade dance without the contract spirit, that kind of action amounts to nothing but suicide.

Without the power of spirits, there was absolutely no way to beat other elementalists. Such a no-brainer simple truth.

But Claire now—

Kamito recalled how she looked like that day when she stood in the rain.

"...Ellis, where is the ceremony going to take place?"

"If I remember correctly, just go straight along the Olivier Avenue- Kamito?"

"—Got it. Ellis, thank you!"

Kamito took Est's hand and started to run.

(Do not try to shoulder everything by yourself. Idiot!)

Part 4

Claire walked alone in the alley within the academic town.

She looked dejected, and her steps were very heavy.

However, she had to go. There is no choice but to move forward.

For the sake of Scarlet who shielded her with its own body, she must obtain an extremely strong spirit—an overwhelming power that will not lose to anyone.

...It could not be reconciled. In front of that terrifying Demon Spirit, she couldn't do anything.

Moreover, because of her own arrogance and stupidity , she had lost Scarlet, her most important partner that had accompanied her since childhood.

Further, had Kamito not come to her rescue, she would surely have been killed.

"...Why did I think of that guy's face again!?"

Claire shook her head, trying to get rid of Kamito's image in her mind.

"—I do not need that guy. I survived on my own in the past and even now."

Yes, she would not stop here. Claire Rouge must face the battle alone.

—I want more power, a strong power that will not lose to anyone.

A strong power so I will never lose anything again. A strong power to take back what I have lost.

For example—like the power of that girl that I admired on first sight three years ago.

The overwhelming power of the Strongest Blade Dancer, Ren Ashbell.

"—You desire power so much?"

"......?"

Hearing the sudden voice, Claire quickly turned around.

There stood a beautiful girl.

It was a girl in a dark dress with lustrous black hair.

Her refined face exhibited a subtle grace, and a beauty that somehow looked like a dissociation with normal humans.

She had pitch black pupils, as if one will be sucked in with one look.

Claire instantly discarded her alertness, charmed by the beauty of the girl.

"Thank you. Because of you, Kamito has awoken."

"Who are you? What are you talking about?"

"However, this is not enough, his true self is much more than that."

The girl giggled, and slowly approached Claire.

Claire did not move. No, she couldn't move.

"What?"

"If you seek more strength, please accept this."

The girl gracefully stretched out a slender hand.

Above her palm, a mass of ominous fog-like black object floated.

"This is a spirit!?"

"Yes, it can help you draw out your real strength."

"My real strength..."

Claire absentmindedly murmured.

Had it been the usual Claire, surely she would not hesitate to brush that hand away.

The contract spirits were to be gained by one's own hand. They were not something received from others.

However, the flame in Claire's heart was gradually diminishing.

So weak that it would likely extinguish at any time.

Therefore—Claire took that hand. She accepted the spirit presented by that girl.

The black mist gradually seeped into her hand and disappeared.

Sharp pain instantly shot up from the left hand, an ominous black spirit seal was engraved on it.

"The frenzied spirit Gespenst—Do you like it?"

The girl in black smiled.

Like a cruel little girl.

Like an innocent demon.

Chapter 8: The Strongest Blade Dancer

Part 1

Academy Town was a small-scale town within the premises of the Areishia Spirit Academy.

The townscape, lined with stone buildings, was filled with the tumult of people.

While bumping many times over into the coming-and-going crowds of people, Kamito was running towards the arena.

—If that was him thinking about it too much, it was alright. However, he was feeling strangely uneasy.

(...Absurd. With the loss of her contracted spirit, a blade dance is just...)

While he was out of breath, he ran at full speed, pulling Est's hand.

He did not understand why he was so frantic for her sake.

Claire Rouge was a—tyrant, who was prideful, willful and quick to lash her whip.

However, he somehow could not leave her alone.

(After all, her true self is—)

Kamito stopped at that moment.

"—Here, right?"

Before the arena built at the center of the town, there was a crowd of spectators gathered.

The blade dance was originally a holy ritual to let spirits enjoy themselves—a kind of Kagura.

However, there was no change to the fact that it was also the highest form of entertainment to humans.

Also, the same as other festivals, the spirits preferred a great number of enthusiastic people.

He showed his academy student badge to the guard and entered inside, and pushed aside clamoring spectators to get to the front.

There were ear-splitting cheers. The sound of shrills of weapons. The intense blade dance had already started at the arena.

There were about 20 participants. Various types of spirits were jumbled together and fighting.

It was a battle royale system where the last one remaining would earn the right to contract with a powerful militarized spirit.

Kamito searched for Claire—

"...!?"

For that unbelievable sight, he doubted his eyes.

That Claire Rouge was—

Covered all over with wounds and crawling.

Against the contracted spirits boasting tremendous power, Claire was fighting with just a whip and Spirit Magic.

While her whole body was hit and slammed into a wall, she stood up and fought again and again.

"Claire—"

He could not go help her. If Kamito got in and helped her, she would be naturally disqualified.

If he did that, she would probably never forgive him.

Kamito bit his teeth and in front of him, Claire was blown away.

Part 2

(—Weak. Why am I so weak?)

While being thrown to the ground, Claire strongly bit her lips. The taste of blood spread across her tongue. It seemed that she was cut somewhere inside her mouth. She planned to stand up, but her hands went numb and did not move. It seemed to have caused a cerebral concussion. Even several bones of her ribs might be suffering damage.

"Guu...!"

Even so, she still did not raise the surrender card.

She slowly stood up on shaky legs.

She sternly looked up. At the center of the altar was a worshiped stone pillar. Within that, there was a rank-A battle-class militarized spirit—Glasya-Labolas sealed inside, brought in from the imperial capital.

Having brought down many spirit knights in the past wars, it was a famous giant-man spirit.

(...If I obtain that, I can be strong.)

—Nee-sama surely can be saved!

"Flame—dance in my hand, dance!"

She turned the divine power dwelling within herself into flames and produced a fireball of spirit magic in her palm.

In her situation where there was no supply of divine power from Scarlet (her contracted spirit), even for Claire , who was superior, to produce such a small flame took all her might. Naturally, such a thing could not bring down spirits.

However, if she aimed for the elementalists, possibly—there might be a tiny chance of winning.

"Huh? Do you still plan on doing this? You don't learn, do you"

—She heard a scorning voice from her front.

"...!"

She bit her teeth and lifted her head. The two elementalists were standing with ridiculing expressions.

They were the Academy's upper classmen. They were respectively using Adamantine Spirit and Demon Mirror Spirit.

"Hey, are you truly an idiot? You don't even have a contracted spirit."

"That very part of you is irritating, you know."

"...You!"

Aiming at the two upper classmen ridiculing her, Claire released the fireball.

However, the fireball was stopped by the bore-looking Adamantine Spirit and easily repelled.

"Ahahaa, what's that, spirit magic? —Do it, Adamantine!"

The girl on the other side cruelly curved her lips and gave an order to her contracted spirit.

The Adamantine Spirit emitted a blue radiance and rushed and struck Claire's abdomen.

"Agg...!"

A mumbling scream escaped from Claire's mouth.

She did not dare aim for her vital points. She was slowly tormenting her and enjoying herself.

This was not a splendorous blade dance for spirits to enjoy. It was merely unsightly violence.

"...How cheeky, you. Despite being that Calamity Queen's younger sister."

The upper classman's face was really distorted in hatred. While being hit many times over her whole body—finally, Claire recalled. These two were colleagues

, who were one-sidedly knocked down by Claire at a practice match a month ago. They were still resentful about that time.

"What's with that look? If you don't give up quickly, you'll really die!"

"It's alright if you quickly kneel down and lick our shoes. Truly, that foolishness is the same as your sister."

"...Shut...up, be silent."

Claire tightly grasped the sand scattered on the ground.

"Hn, did you say something?"

"I said... be silent."

It was no good. She could not restrain it.

(Only abuses at Nee-sama, no matter what, my boiling point for that is low!)

She put divine power into her left hand, which was grasping sand. A black spirit seal that was re-engraved ominously glowed.

And then the moment the path was connected, a horrifying sensation ran all over her body.

She would not be defeated at such a place. There was no value in her weak self.

(To grasp a more powerful power in my hand—!)

"What... a contracted spirit!?"

The upperclassmen's eyes opened in surprise.

"If you wish for it, I'll show you. This is—my true power!"

Gou!

The black flame, released from Claire's hand, gulped down the Adamantine Spirit in an instant.

Appearing from within the blazing flame was—

A flickering jet black magic beast.

It was not a noble flame like Scarlet. It was a flame of darkness, showing signs of madness.

Guo...ruuuuuu...

The beast's hair-raising roar shook the entire atmosphere in the arena.

Part 3

"...What's that!?"

Kamito got up from the audience seating and shouted.

The black flame spirit that Claire brought forth engulfed the Adamantine Spirit in front of it in an instant .

—It was not Scarlet.

Its appearance was similar to that hell cat, but the presence of that divine power was overly ominous.

The jet-black flame spirit bit and crushed the demon mirror spirit at the other side and was devouring those remains like a starving beast. That was not all. The spirits around the black spirit suddenly writhed as if going mad and began eating each-others existence.

"The frenzy is spreading...!"

Kamito recalled the demon spirit that appeared in Astral Zero last night.

And about the water spirit that went out of control in the bathroom.

The spirits, in a frenzy, lost their reasoning and were unable to restrain their powers. Until their own existence were extinguished, they would conduct themselves with their impulses for destruction.

However, that black Magic Beast—

(It's forcefully snatching away Claire's divine power!?)

Claire stood rock still at the center of the arena with an exhausted expression.

From the black spirit seal engraved on her left hand, blood was trickling down.

Her face was pale and her whole body was quivering bit by bit. It looked like she was also barely standing.

If the situation was left as it was, she might lose her life.

The spectators, who realized that something was strange with the appearance of the spirits, suddenly began making a commotion.

The elementalist girls, in the arena, were also perplexed at their contracted spirits that suddenly did not listen to their commands.

"Damn, what are the guys in Knights doing?"

Kamito looked around the inside of the arena. Despite being an obviously strange situation, the Spirit Knights that should have been prepared for unexpected situations were not moving. What was going on?

However, the Spirit Knights standing at the arena gate were all rooted at the same spot, staring into empty space . Their eyes were not focused. It was as if they had been entranced—

"...What? What the heck is happening?"

"That's a frenzy spirit, Kamito."

Est, who was beside him, muttered expressionlessly.

"A frenzy spirit?"

"It is a possession-type spirit that causes spirits to go berserk. It isn't such a high status spirit, but the spirit possessed loses its reasoning and, until its own existence vanishes, it will continue to fight."

"Possess—? Don't tell me, that black Magic Beast is Scarlet!?"

"Affirmative. That hell cat is a very powerful spirit, it should not vanish from the extent of being beaten by the demon spirit. It seems that it temporary lost the ability to manifest but—"

"Is that so..."

The fire of the flame spirit remained. However, Claire continuously thought that Scarlet vanished, so she was not able to connect the path.

"—But, in that frenzied condition, vanishing completely is also just a matter of time."

"Ah, I understand."

Kamito nodded.

Scarlet—a flame spirit with the appearance of a hell cat cladded in noble flames.

That was the very flame of a girl named Claire.

That flame turned into a crazy disgusting Magic Beast that was indulging and eating the spirits.

Something like that could not be her—Claire's desired flame.

"—Est. I ask of you, lend me your strength."

"I am Kamito's sword. I'll do as you desire."

Est gently grasped Kamito's hand. There was a feeling of a hand, cold but surprisingly soft.

"Dispassionate Queen of Steel, the sacred sword that destroys evil—now form my sword!"

Kamito spun the releasing of the elemental waffe; at the same time, Est's body turned into particles of light and vanished.

In the next moment, a silver glowing single edged sword appeared in Kamito's hand.

The spirit language inscription, carved on the edge, was—Terminus Est.

Just by lightly holding it, he understood that it was a tremendously famous sword.

"I'm sorry. The path to my true form is closed, so this is the limit for me currently."

Est, who turned into the form of a sword, said apologetically.

"No, this is plenty. —Let's go, Est!"

Kamito prepared Terminus Est and jumped into the arena where the raging black flame was.

The moment he landed onto the ground, the magic beast of darkness bared its fangs and pounced to attack him.

He brandished the sword with a flourish, knocked away the black flame, and rushed over to Claire's side.

"Claire!"

"...Kamito"

Claire opened her ruby-colored eyes.

Her knees were on the ground and she was breathing heavily. Her delicate body was going to collapse at any time.

The blood, trickling from the spirit seal on her left hand, was dyeing the sand scattered on the ground red.

At that moment, the black Flame Magic Beast mowed onto the ground with its claws, like it was making fun of it.

There was the scent of burning in the air. The hot wind with pebbles mixed in gently brushed Kamito's cheeks.

"...!?"

In a hair's breadth, Kamito dodged the black flame's claws. He drove in a slash at the black flame spirit that was just knocked down.

The silver sword flash drew an arc. The elemental waffe of the sword spirit cut up even the intangible flames—

The black Flame Magic Beast let out an ear-splitting scream and broke up in the air. It didn't mean that it vanished. The flames that were scattered were burning at their respective positions and formed a flaming wall surrounding Kamito in it. Kamito clicked his tongue and stopped at that spot.

"Claire, get yourself together, come to your senses!"

"Wh...What... Why are you here—"

A confused expression surfaced on Claire's face—

"...!?"

Then, as if she just began to realize it, she opened her eyes in terror.

The scene that flew into her eyes was a cruel disastrous scene.

There was a blazing, disgusting black flame.

A group of spirits was in a frenzy and were devouring each other.

The students of the academy were losing their consciousness from having their divine power eaten and were falling down to the ground one by one—

"Claire, is this the power you wanted? Something like this? These are your flames!"

Kamito shouted as if he was throwing up.

While he cleared away the attacking flame with the sword, he reached out his hand towards Claire.

"I...I...—"

Claire moved her lips with her pale facial expression—

She instantly shook her head as if she had changed her mind.

"Sh...Shut up! I... I need the power!"

The red twintail hair violently sprung up.

The black flame blazed even more as if responding to Claire's fury.

"...You don't understand. My feelings of being always alone—"

Claire lay face down and said that while gasping.

That day, four years ago, was when the still childish Claire Elstein's life ended.

The girl, who was betrayed by her most loved sister, had both her parents imprisoned and lost everything, was—

To live taking persecutions as Calamity Queen's sister.

If she didn't become strong alone, she would not be able to live on.

"...You're not alone, idiot."

"Eh?"

At Kamito's words—

Claire raised her head with a blank expression.

"I am here. I'll be by your side. After all, I'm—"

Kamito approached Claire with a step.

The flame wall in their surroundings burned with intimidation.

"D...Don't come here..."

"Claire—"

"Do not come here!"

Pashin!— She closed her eyes and strongly struck her leather whip at Kamito's cheek.

Red blood flowed from his cheek. Kamito did not even wipe that and took another step—

"...!? Why didn't you avoid it?"

Claire's cherry-colored lips were quivering.

"I didn't plan on hitting... and yet."

Kamito stood before Claire and slowly raised his hand over his head.

"...!"

Claire thought it was a strike, and reflexively closed her eyes tightly.

Then—

....*Poff*.

"Eh?"

Claire widely opened her ruby-colored eyes.

She looked up at Kamito with a blank expression.

"—Claire, I like your flames."

Kamito stirred up and crumpled Claire's red hair.

"...Wh!? Ah, ...Li...Like...? Eh?"

Claire's cheeks were dyed bright red inside.

"They burn prettily, dazzlingly and nobly. I like your flames."

"Ah, sh...sh..."

—That was why he wanted to protect those flames.

"If you want power—"

Kamito looked straight into Claire's eyes and said.

"I'll be your contracted spirit."

"Kamito..."

In Claire's red eyes, a drop of tear surfaced—

Confused, she wiped it with her uniform sleeve.

"Wh...What are you saying? You are originally my Slave Spirit!"

"Ah, that is right..."

Kamito bitterly smiled and gently removed his hand from Claire's head.

At that moment, he sliced and drove away the black Flame Magic Beast that roared and advanced while attacking with the sword.

With his back facing Claire, he blocked its way like a knight protecting a princess.

"—Hey, Scarlet. Did you forget your precious master?"

With Kamito's words thrown at it, the black flame that clad the Magic Beast trembled for a moment.

Scarlet—it seemed to respond to that name.

"...Scarlet?"

Claire asked.

"Ah, it wasn't that your partner vanished. It just temporarily lost its power. Although, it's now possessed by a frenzy spirit and it has changed into such an appearance."

"...Scarlet is alive!?"

Claire was taken aback and raised her head. Kamito nodded.

"Ah, this sword—Est informed me."

"...That's, by no means, that Sword Spirit?"

"That's right. But she probably can't even use a tenth of her original power."

Taking a stance with Terminus Est in both his hands, Kamito turned towards the black flame magic beast.

"..."

Claire stared at the thunderously raging black flame.

She saw something within that flame and swiftly raised her head—

"...Yes, that is Scarlet."

She wiped her tears to shake it off.

"If that's the case—"

"Claire, stand back. A frenzied spirit will attack even its contractor."

Kamito restrained Claire, who planned to go to the front, with his hand—

Claire stopped that hand and shook her head.

"Scarlet is in a frenzy because of me. Therefore, only I can take her back."

—Flames, dance in my hand, dance!

Spun from her cherry-colored lips was the spirit language aria.

At that moment, a small fireball was born at the palm of her hand.

"Spirit Magic? What can such a small fireball—"

"—Like this."

At that instant, Claire pushed the burning fireball into her left hand.

There was the sound of flesh burning.

"O...Oi, Claire!?"

"...A...gu...uuuu—!"

While barely clenching her teeth, Claire moaned in anguish.

On her pale face, perspiration like waterfalls flowed along her chin.

"You...!"

Kamito finally understood.

The black spirit seal, re-engraved on Claire's left hand—that was the symbol of contract with that frenzy spirit.

The spirit seal was an exclusive Gate to connect the path between Astral Zero and this world.

If that was destroyed, naturally, the contract with the spirit would be annulled.

Claire was physically burning the spirit seal and was breaking the contract with the frenzy spirit!

Guoroooooouuu...

The Magic Beast, clad in black flames, raged like a thunderous wind.

With the path being burned off, it shared the same pain as Claire, its contractor.

"Sorry, Scarlet, I too... will endure—"

Claire was putting up with the pain and that moment when Claire's knees hit the ground—

The frenzied magic beast roared and sprung at Claire.

"—!"

Kamito quickly stepped in and got into the magic beast's bosom in one bound.

The claws, clad in flames, burned the ends of his hair and at that instant—he slashed down with the sword when they passed each other.

There was a flashing sword swing. At the same time, the red hot flames that could melt even iron attacked Kamito's whole body—

"Kamito!"

Claire's scream resounded.

However, Kamito's body had already disappeared.

The moment the sword and the claws crossed, he dodged like a shadow and had turned to the flame spirit's back.

(—A frenzied spirit certainly has its power greatly increased.)

The black flame spirit turned around—but it was too late.

(However, no matter what, its movements became dull . In that case, it can't win against me—)

Kamito kicked the ground and sharply turned, and swung the silver shining Terminus Est—

With that stroke of the sword, the black flame, possessing the flame spirit, was severed and killed.

"—Claire, are you alright?!"

Kamito rushed over, Claire was lying on the floor with a pale face.

From her red forelock clinging onto her forehead, drops of perspiration were dripping down.

"A...guu...!"

A gasping, like it was hoarse from her inner throat, leaked out. Her left hand sustained a severe burn.

Just the texture of her thin pretty skin was hideously burned, that scar was too painful to look at.

However, the black spirit seal that was engraved disappeared without leaving any trace.

With this, the path with that frenzy spirit should be completely severed.

"That was so reckless. Look, I'll treat it for you, so show it to me."

"I...I'm fine, it's just this much..."

Claire's cheeks turned slightly red and she quickly turned away.

At that moment, intense pain was suddenly running all over, causing her to softly scream "Hyauu" and making her eyes turn teary.

"What, you're not being honest."

"Sh...Shut up, I'll turn you into cinders!"

Kamito bitterly smiled at Claire's usual behavior.

—However, this is the usual Claire Rouge.

She was not suited to have just a sorrowful face.

"By the way, where—"

Suddenly, Kamito turned serious and asked.

"What..."

"Where did you contract something like a frenzy spirit ?"

"That's—"

Claire stammered with her words and at that time.

"Ah, did you receive my present with pleasure?"

From behind, they heard such an inappropriate voice.

It was a gentle voice, like downy hair tickling one's earlobe.

"...!?"

It sounded familiar—but that was out of the question.

For three years, he always—yearned to hear it, that voice.

Kamito slowly turned around.

And there—

A beautiful girl, wearing a dark black dress, was giggling.

Part 4

Kamito stood still at that place with a frozen expression.

"Don't tell me, tha..t's..."

What was there was—

A girl, who was the very light to Kamito.

She gave the boy, who had closed his heart into a cold cage, a warm light—

"...Res...tia?"

Kamito muttered in a blurry voice.

"—It has been quite a long time, Kamito."

The girl, wearing a darkness-color dress, impishly smiled.

...It was unbelievable.

However, that appearance was the same as it was from that time, three years ago.

That beautiful face, without doubt, belonged to the girl , who Kamito knew.

The darkness spirit, Restia.

The contracted spirit of the strongest blade dancer—Ren Ashbell.

"Restia, I—"

Kamito reached out his hand and he planned to approach the girl.

However, his legs, as if they were sewed on to that place, could not move.

Despite that, the girl who he was continuously searching for the last three years, was right in front of him—

—Something was strange. His elementalist intuition was telling him that.

She was smiling like that.

Moveover, in the girl's hand, what was that ominous black lump?

"I wanted to meet you, Kamito. However—"

The girl faced that black lump at the altar in the center and threw it there.

"...?"

"Let's leave the hug to the next opportunity. Look, as that child wakes up."

When the black lump turned into a fog in midair, it surrounded the holy stone pillar at the altar.

The stone pillar that was brought in from the imperial capital and in which was the sealed militarized spirit.

"Restia... What in the world are—?"

Kamito muttered and at that time.

Suddenly, the ground violently shook.

"What...!?"

"Ah, looks like it has already woken up."

"Restia...?"

"Kamito, be careful! She is the one who gave me that frenzy spirit!"

Claire shouted to the absentminded boy.

"Wh...at...!?"

At that moment, a ground-shaking roar resounded.

Pishii— the stone pillar enveloped in the black fog cracked.

Zu...zuzu...zuzuzuzu...!

From the tear in the stone pillar, a giant human hand appeared.

That was—

(Glasya-Labolas is—going into a frenzy!?)

Taken aback, he turned around. Restia was giggling.

That somewhat devilish smile was something Kamito had never seen.

"—Good bye, Kamito. Let's meet again."

"Restia... What is going on!? What are you—"

"Because that is your wish."

"...!?"

Kamito's face froze.

"Wait—Please wait, Restia!"

"I had waited, it has already been three years."

"Resti..."

Restia smiled once again and disappeared into the empty space that became a black fog.

Kamito dropped both his hands like he was exhausted and stood still and dumbfounded.

—He did not understand what had happened.

(Restia gave Claire that frenzy spirit...?)

He could not believe it. No, he did not want to believe it.

However, the girl's appearance belonged to the darkness spirit that he had certainly been continuously searching for.

His former contracted spirit.

The girl showed Kamito, who lost his human heart, his first warm light.

If that girl changed, that—

(It's my fault... I had changed her into something different.)

The Blade Dance three years ago.

Kamito, who came out victorious as Ren Ashbell,—

Attempted to have a Wish that humans can never wish for to be granted.

For that reason, he decided to lose her.

He believed that she would be alive somewhere.

The aching of the spirit seal engraved on his left hand whispered.

—She would be alive again. He could still make up for his crimes.

By no means, it became that they met up again in such a manner—it was something he never thought of.

"Restia... Is this my punishment?"

If that was the case, it was too cruel.

Like his whole body's strength was drawn out and he was going to collapse, his knees hit the ground.

He was plunged into darkness.

"Kamito!? Hey, are you listening, Kamito!"

Even Claire's voice calling for Kamito was only absentmindedly heard.

Once again, the ground violently shook.

Passing through the Gate opened in the empty space, Glasya-Labolas was attempting to emerge.

The wall of the arena collapsed due to the tremor and a large amount of rubble poured down over Kamito's head.

Just before his body was going to be crushed—that moment.

Pashii— Kamito's head was twined around by a whip.

"...Guoo!"

Kamito was violently dragged along the ground and he made an anguished voice.

Immediately after, a large amount of rubble fell at the place where Kamito had been at.

There was a thunderous sound. Clouds of dust fluttered up in the air.

...If he was crushed, he would have, without a doubt, died.

"Idiot! Wh...What are you doing!"

Over his head, Claire took up a daunting pose and shouted.

"Hey, do you want to die? Or do you want to turn to cinders?"

"No, not those two choices—Guoo!"

"Hmm, if you can retort, you are alright, aren't you!"

Claire constricted Kamito's head with her whip and with a jerk, drew her face closer.

"..."

It was at a point-blank distance as if the tips of their noses were touching.

Her ruby-colored pupils, filled with a strong will, were before his eyes.

Nevertheless in such a moment, Kamito was reflexively startled.

"...Come on, what? What is it?"

Seemingly noticing that her face was too close, Claire's cheeks turned red and she slightly loosened her whip.

"It...It's not like I'm particularly interested but... for once, listen up."

"Wh...What..."

"That girl just now, h...how is she related to you?"

"She—"

Kamito averted his eyes from Claire's clear eyes

"Was my contracted spirit."

"Spirit?"

Kamito silently nodded and clenched his left hand.

"...It's my fault. It's my fault that she—"

Thoughts of her made Kamito sink into the dark abyss once again,—

"So what!"

Claire's voice, which was cold, drew him back.

"Eh?"

"I am saying so what!"

Claire was standing straight up, with both hands on her waist and her twintail hair over her shoulder.

Until a while ago, she was extremely depressed.

Now, there was above all else her noble, beautiful crimson flame.

"No, it is because I..."

Kamito was taken aback and became dumbfounded—

"Didn't you promise me just now that 'I'll be your contracted spirit'?! Please hold on to the responsibility of your own words!"

Pishipashi! Claire struck Kamito's back with her whip.

"Ouch! Wh...What are you doing! Whipping a dead person!"

Without thought, Kamito stood up and shouted.

Claire suddenly smiled.

"A dead person? Then how about dying once? Look, look at that."

"Aah?"

Kamito turned his face—

From the Gate in the empty space, bluish-white light emitted and Glasya-Labolas came crawling out.

The battle-class militarized spirit, whose seal was undone; its over-all length was more than ten-odd meters .

Glasya-Labolas roared. With just that roar, half of the audience seats were blown away.

It seemed that the audience had already escaped, but there should still be many citizens outside the arena.

From the giant empty hole in the wall, the state of the plaza could be observed.

Everyone was screaming and jostling, while running away. In response to the sudden appearance of Glasya-Labolas, the plaza and the main street were filled with chaos and agonizing cries.

Placing its hand on the crumbled arena wall, Glasya-Labolas slowly walked out.

With his every step, the ground shook as if an earthquake occurred.

How things would turn out, if such a thing got into the town was quite obvious.

"Waiting for help from the academy would be pointless. They will arrive too late. Just the two of us will have to do this."

"...Ah, that's right."

However—Kamito still had not recovered from the shock.

Even Terminus Est, which he was tightly grasping, was losing that cool and clear radiance.

An elemental waffe would demonstrate its true value according to the elementalist's divine power.

With Kamito's current condition, he was unable to even maintain the sword's strength.

For example, even if he fought, it was certain that it would be instantly broken.

"..."

Claire stared at Kamito in such a state with a rigid expression.

"It seems like you're still half asleep. If that's the case, I'll wake you up."

After that, for some reason, her face turned red and she quickly looked away.

And, in the next moment.

"...!?"

Suddenly, his lips were closed.

It was hot. It was a tender sensation that was gently getting wet.

His nose was tickled by the faint scent of her hair.

"Hn..."

Several seconds later, their lips slowly separated.

"Are you awake?"

"...A...Ah."

Kamito nodded like he was befuddled.

"Th...This is something... only once."

Biting her lips, Claire turned bright red and looked downwards.

The numbing kiss had blown away all the anguish from Kamito's mind.

"...Shock therapy? However, this is a little too effective.
"

"Hm...hmm, that's fine! —Well then, let's go, Kamito!"

While her face was bright red, Claire spun the spirit language summoning.

—Protector of red flames, watchman of the unsleeping hearth!

—Now is the time, by the blood contract, hurry and come to my side!

Immediately, a blazing flame whip was born in Claire's hand.

It was not the black flame, invaded by the frenzy spirit
.

That was the flame of the noble Claire Rouge—Scarlet's elemental waffe.

"Thank you, Scarlet. Lend me your power for just a bit longer."

Responding to Claire's feelings, the flame whip thunderously growled.

"I won't make Scarlet, who is weakened, do something unreasonable. I'll go around it to support, so you strike that giant human spirit."

"Ah, I got it!"

Kamito firmly nodded and tightly grasped Terminus Est.

(—That's right.) It is alright to not think about Restia now.

(Now, just—)

(To protect this tomboy princess because that's what I promised!)

Taking a stance with the sword, Kamito kicked the ground and jumped.

"I'll show you, Claire Rouge"

The Strongest Blade Dancer—Ren Ashbell's blade dance!

Glasya-Labolas smashed the stone wall and stepped his foot out to the plaza outside the arena.

Kamito took a roundabout path to its behind and with a one-step jump, he pierced its ankle with the sword.

Vuooooooon!

Glasya-Labolas let out a destructive roar. While the shock seemed to be blowing him away, Kamito clung onto the sword that pierced it.

(...What power! As expected of a militarized spirit!)

The eyes of the giant, that were burning in anger, caught sight of Kamito's figure at its feet.

It roared again and swung down its boulder-like fist.

Kamito pulled out the sword and jumped back, then using the giant's arm as a stepping stone, he jumped again.

In order to crush Kamito, who appeared on top of his head, Glasya-Labolas reached out with its hand—

At that moment, when it seemed like it caught his ankle.

"Kamito!"

Claire swung her flame whip and bound that arm. As Scarlet was exhausted, cutting up the spirit could not be done. However, roughly sealing its movement was possible.

There was the thunderous sound of the wind blowing violently. Glasya-Labolas shifted its anger to Kamito on its head. In the state of passing by, Kamito brandished the sword. He cut the black crystal-like eyeball.

At that moment, from the eyeball that cracked, something like a black fog was blown out.

(That's the frenzy spirit...!?)

The black fog coiled about the sword. Just at that moment, the tip of its edge was corroding to black.

Kamito was taken aback. —The frenzy spirit was a spirit that granted crazy attribute to spirits.

(Est is being encroached—!)

Kamito twisted his body and swung and cleared away the black fog.

He broke his stance in the air and was about to strike the ground as he was.

Then, Glasya-Labolas' fist swung downwards.

Kamito took a stance with the sword in front of him—but he did not make it!

"...!"

Glasya-Labolas' fist was—precisely stopped above his head.

Its arm, which was about to swing down at any time, was twisted with a burning flame whip.

"Kamito! Now's the chance, quickly do it!"

"Ah—"

Kamito laughed fearlessly, stood up and concentrated his consciousness on the sword.

The elemental waffe of the sword spirit, Est, increased in radiance as it responded to Kamito's feelings

He kicked the ground and jumped. Kamito's sword once again danced in the midair.

And then—

"Ooooooooooo!"

The shining flashing sword cut Glasya-Labola's body right in half.

Part 5

That moment when Kamito cut and turned over Glasya-Labolas, Claire was motionlessly staring at it.

With the shining sword in his hand, Kazehaya Kamito danced a splendorous blade dance—

That was almost—

Like the blade dance of Ren Ashbell, who she saw at the stage of the Blade Dance three years ago.

(...Don't tell me.)

The moment Glasya-Labolas turned into particles of light, the flame whip returned to the form of a small hell cat. Claire tenderly embraced the flame spirit, which became small like a kitten.

"—Thank you, Scarlet."

Epilogue

Opening his eyes, Kamito found himself lying in bed again.

It was not Rinslet's room this time.

There were large bookcases and shelves of medicine; this should be the health center of the academy.

It looked like he couldn't shoulder the burden of elemental waffe and passed out, again.

After all, he was still in a physical condition where he had to lie down and rest, so it was no wonder that he collapsed when performing a blade dance in such a state.

(Oh... I really can't do it the same as old times.)

Kamito smiled bitterly at the wrist wrapped in bandages.

To have a blank period of three-years is too much for an elementalist.

Kamito was about to slowly get up from bed—

"Kamito, you woke up?"

A voice could be heard from somewhere.

Looking around, he couldn't see anyone.

Then something wiggled inside the bed sheets.

"—What!"

Kamito quickly pulled up the sheets.

Inside, there is the naked sword spirit.

"...Est, what are you doing here!"

"Sleeping with you." Est replied with a deadpan look.

"Not that, I am asking why are you in my bed!"

"Because I am your contracted spirit."

"....."

There's no use. She is not the type you could communicate with easily.

Kamito held his head that started aching little by little.

Just at that time. *Tramp*- suddenly the door opened.

"Kamito, have you woken up—"

Claire stiffened as she came inside the room.

Gogogogogo...!

"This is not how it looks..."

But with a naked girl only in knee-socks on top of him, whatever explanations given were futile.

"You... You! What the hell are you doing?"

A burning flame whip appeared in Claire's hand.

"You are in the way, Sword Spirit. I am going to turn this guy into charcoal cinders. Please move aside!"

"No, I am Kamito's contract spirit. To protect him is my duty."

"Sword ... sword spirit, listen! Kamito... Kamito is my Slave Spirit, so you as his contract spirit, are in my possession as well."

"Kamito, is it true?"

"Well ... No... See..."

As Kamito struggled for words, other sounds could be heard from the corridor.

"Milady if you don't hurry, Miss Claire will be the first! "

"Being the first or not, for me, doesn't mean—"

"...Eh? Rinslet and Carol, what are you doing here?"

"Knight, Knight commander, you too, why are you here...!?"

"I ... I'm just here to express our gratitude to Kamito on behalf of the Sylphid Knights. There is absolutely no other meaning!"

The three princesses opened the door as they had their conversation.

Then- all witnessed Est on the bed at the same time.

"What!" "Oops!" "What on earth..."

Googogogog...

Ellis conjured up Ray Hawk; Rinslet called out Ice Longbow.

Last, an inexplicable frying pan was in Carol's hand out of nowhere.

"Kamito, what last words do you have to say?"

Claire waved her flame whip and smiled.

"Wait... This is a mistake- oh wa ah ah ah ah ah ah!"

The flame whip mercilessly lashed down on Kamito's head.

The grand feast for elementalists—Blade Dance would be held in two months.

FIN

Afterword

Author's

—You be my contracted spirit!

With that, nice to meet you, or perhaps, long time no see, this is Shimizu Yuu.

My new series, 'Seirei Tsukai no Blade Dance', raises its curtains here!

This story is an alternate world fantasy x battle action where the main character, a young boy named Kamito, meets a ferocious, beautiful girl Claire in an academy that trains elementalists and together they aim to fight in a grand battle tournament— 'Blade Dance'!

Contracted spirits that can transform into weapons —' Elemental Waffe'— that are used by beautiful girls to fight, spirits that only girls are supposed to be able to use , the main character is a young boy that was able to make a contract, the secret of the crest engraved on the young boy's left hand, the powerful sealed spirit that was sealed into a scared sword, and the tsundere princesses x3 (the maid included) + a cool cute mysterious girl, and so on,

with all sorts of content. Anyways, I have enjoyed writing it. "I'll turn you to cinders!" is the favorite phrase of an excellent but ferocious, beautiful girl heroine, Claire . Kamito's fate of being made to be her slave spirit(?) and so on...!

Ah, although I said battle, the basis is an academy romance comedy, the battle of love of the girls surrounding Kamito is also steadily turning to a dead heat! Even after this, I'll try my best to aim for "increased love, double the fun, superior battles!". It will be a blessing if all you dear readers also somehow enjoy yourselves lightheartedly!

Now for the thanks. I am truly grateful to many people for the start of my new series.

First, Sakura Hanpen-sensei, who drew superb cute beautiful girls + spirit, truly thank you very much. Every time, I received a draft, I was in agony. The girls' expression and poses are very charming. The girls are also cute but the cat is magnificently cute.

The glittering star administrators of MFJ that read my manuscript many times, and gave me precious advice and ideas, truly thank you very much. You have my gratitude for all the advice.

The chief editor, Misaka, the proofreading team, the binding team, the sales team and the rest that had something to do with this work, to everyone, thank you very much.

And now, my greatest thanks is to all you readers holding onto this book in your hands. Shimizu's release of this book is something due to everyone's support. The questionnaires made me really happy!

—Well then, let's meet again in volume two!

November 2010, Shimizu Yuu

Illustrator's

Nice to meet you, I go by Sakura Hanpen.

This is the first time I'm drawing light novel illustrations.

I have been really tense.

It is good when I draw cutely, however...!

Personally, my favorite is Scarlet, neko-yan!

For humans, Rinslet is my favorite.

Things like tsundere ojou-sama are my specialty, how cute...

Shimizu-sensei, also, I request the next to be Rinslet's naughty scene please. Without fail.

While making such a naughty request, 1 volume ended!

References and Translation Notes

1. ↑ These are sounds of touching and squeezing
2. ↑ Normally while using the Japanese language, when a girl tells a guy to take responsibility it carries the implication of marriage. Hence Kamito's confusion.
3. ↑ Kagura 神[], "god-entertainment" refers to a specific type of Shinto theatrical dance.
4. ↑ Green as in "inexperienced"
5. ↑ An expression one shows when humoring another especially when it is too bothersome to go against the other.
6. ↑ The sound/feeling of a cat skimming over your cloth
7. ↑ Petting and fondling sound
8. ↑ Sound of being hit
9. ↑ Tiramisu is an italian cake and desert
10. ↑ Nee-sama is an honorable way of referring to an elder sister in the japanese language. The term is difficult to properly translate to English and so has been left as is
11. ↑ An extremely respectable way for calling an elder brother in Japanese.
12. ↑ A casual and cute way of referring to an elder brother in Japanese.

13. ↑ French for yes or other confirmatory word
14. ↑ Sound of sitting down